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MOHAMMED,

THE

ARABIAN PROPHET.

A TRAGEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS.

BY

GEORGE H. MILES.

BOSTON:
PHILLIPS, SAMPSON & COMPANY.
1850.

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9.—*Mohammed, the Arabian Prophet.* A tragedy in five acts. By GEORGE H. MILES 12mo., pp. 155. Boston: Phillips, Sampson & Co.

It will be recollected that a year or two since Edwin Forrest offered a prize of one thousand dollars for the best original tragedy in five acts. Nearly one hundred competitors sent in their manuscripts; and the present volume is the one to which the prize was awarded. The design of the play is to explain the life of Mohammed from the age of forty to his death, a period of twenty years. The play has passages of great power and beauty; but the fact that it was selected from a hundred manuscripts, as the best, by competent judges, speaks most emphatically of its merits as a whole; but its great merit lies in giving (which will be regarded by many) the true character of the great founder of Islam, so imperfectly understood.

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The publishers beg leave to state, that in the course of the last year, Mr. EDWIN FORREST offered a prize of *One Thousand Dollars* for the best original *tragedy, in five acts.* Nearly *One Hundred* competitors sent in their manuscripts; and the present volume is the one to which the prize was awarded.

BOSTON, JUNE, 1850.

PREFACE.

The design of this play is to explain the life of Mohammed, from the age of forty to his death, a period of twenty years. Many a single fact, in his extraordinary career, furnishes ample material for a play: many a fable, too, as Voltaire has proved. The love and apostasy of Ali and Fatima, breaking Abu Taleb's heart, — Ayesha betrothed to Omar, but wrested from him by her father, and consigned to the Prophet's arms, — Omar's hypocrisy for the sake of revenge; — plots like this, sparkling with brilliant scenes, occurred to tempt me from my original design.

But I found the naked history superior to all the inventions of imagination. Where the charm is in plot and surprise, repetition sickens us; where the characters themselves attract, it delights.

After all that has been said, the true character of the great founder of Islam is but imperfectly understood. Had he not sincerely believed in the *Unity of God*, had he not detested idolatry, had he not most fervently wished to redeem Arabia from her slavish superstition, *had he not been in earnest in all this*, he could not have accomplished such great and permanent results. Yet, at the very outset of his career, when his motives were purest, his fidelity to Cadijah unimpeached, we know

that he was guilty of wilful deceit and imposture. For, admitting that the appearance of Gabriel and the Mesra were delusions of zealot fancy or of the devil, yet surely he could not dupe himself so far as to believe that the angel *handed* him the Koran, which he either wrote himself, or received from a hired scribe. Here is the difficulty: not only have we to reconcile truth and falsehood, sincerity and deceit, — for, in most historically great men, there is more or less of this, — but we are dealing with one, who, believing himself a Prophet, asserts it by imposture, — the messenger of Allah preparing mankind by a deliberate lie for the reception of Eternal Truth.

From this point of view, the play was written. The brevity required in representation on the stage (at which I aimed) compelled me to omit much that might support my interpretation of this "sincere impostor." Truth rarely floats on the surface of history; it is only by looking long into the stream, that we see the jewel lurking in the bed.

Goëthe thought of bringing Mohammed on the German stage, but contented himself with translating Voltaire. "The piece began with a hymn, which Mohammed sings alone, under the open sky. First he adores the innumerable stars, as so many gods; then rises the friendly star Gad, our Jupiter, and to him, as the king of the stars, new adoration is offered. Soon the moon rises, and wins the eye and heart of the worshipper, who next, greatly refreshed and strengthened, is summoned to new praise by the ascending sun. But these changes, however delightful, are still unsatisfactory, and the mind

feels that it must rise yet above itself; it rises to God, the Only, Eternal, Infinite, to whom all these splendid, yet limited creatures, owe their existence. After, in this way, he had converted himself, he imparts these feelings and ideas to his friends. His wife and Ali become his disciples, without reserve. *In the second act*, he attempts, and Ali with still greater ardor than he, to propagate this faith in the tribe. Assent and opposition appear, according to the variety of characters. The feud begins, the strife becomes violent, and Mohammed is compelled to flee. In the third act, he overcomes his adversaries, makes his religion the public one, and purifies the Kaäba from idols; but as all this cannot be done by power, he is obliged to resort to cunning. The earthly increases and extends itself; the Divine retires, and is obscured. *In the fourth act*, Mohammed pursues his conquests, and his doctrine becomes a pretence rather than an end; all conceivable means must be employed, and barbarities become abundant. A woman, whose husband has been put to death by his order, poisons him. *In the fifth act*, he feels that he is poisoned. His great calmness, — the return to himself, to a higher life, — make him worthy of admiration. He purifies his doctrine, establishes his kingdom, and dies." — *Poetry and Truth.*

It may be inferred that I copied Goëthe, varying the fifth act to suit my own convictions: but, though it is no reproach to borrow from the great German, the resemblance is entirely accidental.

It is no compliment to Christianity, to make Mohammed a monster; it is rather a bitter sneer at human credulity. The lesson conveyed by the life and death of

the Arabian impostor, is the inability of the greatest man, starting with the purest motives, to counterfeit a mission from God, without becoming the slave of hell.

Caled, Cadijah, Ali, Fatima, and Abu Taleb, are true to history; Amrou and Abubeker, only moderately so. The view of Omar is new, perhaps unjust; Ayesha's passion for Ali, only plausible. The introduction of Sophian into the fifth act was a concession to unity of action. It was hard enough to support a continuous action, without maintaining, at the same time, a rigid adherence to *conjectures* about the manner of the Prophet's death. The Arabian Nights, which, as Lane truly says, are the best and truest pictures of Arabian manners, morals, and customs, may warrant the administration of the powder; and the Prophet's secret trust in charms is mentioned by tradition.

Since Mr. Forrest's decision, the tragedy has remained untouched; as submitted to him, it now appears. It is a pleasure again to acknowledge the generosity which tempted and rewarded this first venture in a perilous field.

BALTIMORE, *March 30th*, 1850.

MOHAMMED.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MOHAMMED — The Prophet.

OMAR — An ambitious noble of Mecca. } Neutral
ABUBEKER — The richest man in Mecca. }

ABU TALEB — Mohammed's uncle.

ALI — Abu Taleb's son.

CALED — A soldier, and a fanatic. } Inclined to Sophian
AMROU — A soldier, and a friend of Caled's }

SOPHIAN — Of the family of Ommeya, — hostile to Mohammed

SAAD — } Two magnates of Medina.
OSAID — }

ZEID — Mohammed's slave.

Soldiers, Senators, Bedouins, &c.

CADIJAH — Mohammed's first wife.

AYESHA — His second wife.

FATIMA — His daughter.

The scene is partly in Mecca, and partly in Medina.

MOHAMMED.

ACT I.

SCENE I. *Night of Al Kadir. — Cave of Hara, three miles from Mecca. — Mohammed is seen prostrate upon the slope of a rock, resembling a rude pedestal, his face concealed by his turban. Enter Cadijah.*

Cadijah (*looking timidly around.*) He bade me
meet him here, before the moon
Had silvered half the night; — but, as he spoke,
His flashing eyes were full of mystery;
His words were few, and stern, and tremulous,
And, knotted on his brow, the laboring vein[1]
So fiercely swelled, that in his nervous grasp
I quivered like a leaf, — and still my heart
Seems not to beat, but, with my creeping flesh,
To shudder. Yes — I tremble still. (*She sees him.*)
Asleep? (*She approaches, and bends over him.*)

Asleep! —O, sweet surprise—I breathe again!

(*She embraces him.*)

Son of Abdallah and Amina, hear!

Mohammed, wake! (*She tries to rouse him.*)

'T is strange! — his slumbers ever

Fled at the gentlest whisper of my voice,

Or at the faintest murmur of his babes.

(*She tries again to wake him.*)

Awake! Awake! 'T is thy Cadijah calls thee!

(*She starts up.*)

Alas, this is not sleep! Some evil spirit

O'ershadows thee; — and, with prophetic soul,

Thou didst invoke Cadijah's presence here,

To share thy danger or avert the spell.

(*She falls upon her knees, with her back to him.*)

Hear, great Taâla! gleaming Sirius, hear!

Al Uzza, Hobal, guardian gods of Mecca,

Assist me now!

(*At the mention of these idols, Mohammed lifts his head: as she pronounces the last words, he rises, with his eyes fixed on the top of the rock.*)

Mohammed. Gone! — Gone! — Celestial messenger!

Angel of light!—Whence came those damned sounds?

Cad. My own dear lord!

Moh. What!—thou?—Begone! Away!

The ground is holy!—Yes—'t was there—'t was there

The angel stood, in more than mortal splendor,

Before my dazzled vision!—I have heard thee,

Ambassador from Allah to my soul,

Have heard, and will obey!

(*He bows reverently before the rock.*)

Cad. Alas, he raves!

My lord, what aileth thee?

Moh. Cadijah!—Tell me,—

Was it from thy most pure and cherished lips

Those names accursed fell?

Cad. What names, dear lord?

Moh. Al Uzza, Hobal, Sirius—Pah! they choke me—

The names by which the idols are invoked!

Cad. Yes, I did ask our gods to bless thee.

Moh. Hush!—

Call them not gods—those blind and monstrous idols,

Those crude deformities, misshapen lumps
Of lifeless clay!—THERE IS NO GOD BUT ONE,—
MOHAMMED IS HIS PROPHET!—Never more
Repeat those names where I may hear the sound,—
Nor ever more to them thy spotless heart
Uplift in prayer,—and never more, I charge thee,
If thou dost prize my love, pollute the name,—
The sacred and illustrious name I bear,—
By asking those foul shapes of hell to bless it!
Nay, weep not thus; I did not mean to chide thee,
My dear Cadijah. Hast thou long been here?

Cad. Not long.

Moh. Where was I when thou camest?

Cad. There,

Stretched on that rock, as if in sleep profound,
Thy mantle covering thy face.

Moh. Didst see

Aught else?

Cad. Naught else, Mohammed.

Moh. Was there nothing

Upon the summit of that rock?

Cad. No, nothing.

Moh. To me, alone, of all the sons of earth,

That soul-entrancing vision is vouchsafed!
Hear me, Cadijah. Thou rememberest well
When first I led to fruitful Syria
Thy caravan: my fifteenth summer still
Was blooming in my cheeks. I there beheld
The rites of Jew and Christian, and oft heard
The precepts of their sacred volumes. Then
The unknown truths, of which my pining soul
Had vaguely dreamed, began to dawn in beauty.
In solitude and silence, years rolled by:
Scorning idolatry, mistrusting all
The subtle heresies of monk and Jew,
Mine eye, unsatisfied, was ever raised
To its Creator, asking light! light! light!
It came, at last, Cadijah—here!—this night!—
This very hour!

Cad. What mystery is this!

Moh. Ah! the tremendous recollection bursts
So vividly upon me, that my tongue
Grows cold and speechless. I was here alone,
Expecting thee, when, suddenly, I heard
My name pronounced, with voice more musical
Than Peri warbling in the dreamy ear.

Ravished, I turned, and saw upon that rock,
Resplendent hovering there, an angel form:
I knew 't was Gabriel, Allah's messenger.
Celestial glories compassed him around;
Arched o'er his splendid head, his glistening wings
Shed light, and musk, and melody. No more[2]
I saw, — no more my mortal eye could bear.
Prone on my face I fell, and, from the dust,
Besought him quench his superhuman radiance.
"Look up!" he said: I stole a trembling glance;
And there, a beauteous youth, he stood and smiled.
Then, as his ruby lips unclosed, I heard —
"*Go, teach what mortals know not yet* — THERE IS
NO GOD BUT ONE, — MOHAMMED IS HIS PROPHET!"
E'en as he spoke, his mantling glories burst
With such transporting brightness, that, o'erawed,
I sunk in dizzy trance, which still might thrall
My inmost soul, had not those impious names,
Breathing of hell, dispelled it.

Cad. My Mohammed!

Moh. Cadijah!

Cad. I am lost in deep amazement:
Thy words so marvellous — thy eyes and manner
So earnest, and so full of truth!

Moh. Believe! —
My mission is to all mankind, but first
To *thee!* Dost thou believe?
Cad. My lord!
Moh. My wife!
Believe! —for though thy breath is half my life,
And though I hold thy deep maternal love
Dearer than all the wealth that lines the sea,
Or decks the Persian priest, or tyrant Greek, —
Dearer than all the beauty in the world
Gathered and moulded into one fair woman, —
Yet, by the throne of Allah, whose commands
Possess my soul, if thou believest not,
With thy whole heart and mind, thou shalt expire,
A victim to thy infidelity!
(*She falls upon her knees.*)
Who will believe, if thou art recreant?
Who will receive, if thou dost turn away?
Who will adore, if thou shalt still refuse
To bend thy stubborn knee? 'T is writ above,
By angel fingers, with a pen of light,
Upon the mystic tablets, which contain
Th' eternal scheme fulfilled and unfulfilled,
Thou shalt believe, and shalt be blest forever!

Blest in the shadow of the Tuba tree—
Blest in the pearl-paved garden of Al Jannat—
Blest at the sweet and fragrant fount of Tasnim—
Blest in the midst of Allah and his angels!—
Exalt thy heart in praise and gratitude!—
Confess! confess there is no God but One,—
Mohammed is his Prophet!

Cad. (*prostrate at his feet.*) Yes, there is
No God but One,— Mohammed is his Prophet.

(*Whilst she speaks, with her face buried in her hands, Mohammed silently gloats over his triumph.*)

Moh. (*raising her in his arms.*) Thus to my breast once more, my only idol!
These tears are still more precious than the pearls
Of Paradise; and angels, now ascending,
Waft the pure offering to their greeting King.
But let us gird our camels, since, ere morn
Points out the east, we must depart for Mecca,
There to unfold this wondrous revelation
To Ali and our daughter Fatima;—
For, next to thee, in virtue and in love,
They next shall tread the path to Paradise!

(*Exeunt Mohammed and Cadijah.*)

SCENE II. *Square before the Temple, at sunrise. Enter Omar, buried in thought.*

Omar. Where shall I find a stepping-stone to power?—
Men laud my wisdom — could my wisdom win
Authority, a diadem of pearls
Should ornament and recompense my brains.
What 's wisdom, if it cannot benefit
Its master?

(*He folds his arms on his breast, and muses. Enter Abubeker.*)

Abubeker (*touching Omar.*) Thinking, Omar, —ever thinking.

Omar. Thought 's an infirmity to which I 'm subject.

Abub. A pestilence that blackens you all over.
Thinking of what?

Om. The future!

Abub. (*bowing, in mock reverence.*) Prophesy.

Om. Our governor Abu Taleb 's failing fast;
The peace of Mecca hangs upon his life;
The rival lines of Hashem and Ommeya
Will light their feuds around his funeral torch.

Abub. Sophian, the Ommeyite, must prevail.
Ali, our governor's son, is but a boy,
Artless, all fire and impulse, and a poet.
As for Mohammed, he consumes his life
Moping in Hara's cave or housed in Mecca,
Shunning all intercourse with man or God:
I know not what he means.

Om. He 's not the man
To be absorbed in nothing, Abubeker:
Rely upon it, he means something.

Abub. (*sneering.*) Means!
Sophian's action 's too much for his meaning.
Caled, Amrou, with more than half the army,
And all the Bedouin tribes, are fast Ommeyites.
Two thirds of Mecca clamor for Sophian —
The masses make the governor.

Om. And may
Unmake him too.

Abub. He has the people with him.

Om. And soon may have them on him.

Abub. Will you not
Vote for him?

Om. No! — the shallow demagogue, —

Bold, if you please, and crafty, but without
One element of greatness!—had I half
Your wealth, *I'd* run against him.

Abub. And be crushed.

Ah, Omar, bless your poverty!

Om. (*with affected humility.*) I do.

Abub. You will not vote for Ali or Mohammed?

Om. I'm neutral. [That is, for myself.] *aside.*

Abub. And I
Am neutral too—at present.

Om. Well remembered, friend;
The *future's* for ourselves. But lo! here comes
Sophian. I despise him:—see, the temple
Invites our prayers. (*Exeunt Omar and Abubeker.*)

(*Enter Sophian.*)

Sophian. Old men are just as slow
In dying, as in everything they do.
One old man's life is all that stands between
Me and that aim and summit of my hopes,—
To govern Mecca;—but he *will* not die!
Ah, here he is, and weaker, thank the gods!

(*Enter Abu Taleb.*)

Hail to the honored Governor of Mecca!
Hail, Abu Taleb! I am filled with joy,
To see thy cheeks still ruddy with the bloom
Of youth.

Abu Taleb. No, no: these thin and frosty locks,
Whitened by fourscore years, are drooping down
O'er cheeks as pallid as themselves. My stream
Will soon be lost among the sands.[3]

Soph. The gods
Forbid!

A. Tal. I thank thee.

Soph. May we soon expect
Mohammed, thy dear nephew, from the cave
Of Hara?

A. Tal. Ere the day has closed, I hope.

(*Exit Abu Taleb.*)

Soph. Ay, totter on, thou withered Hashemite!
Soon must the grave, now gaping, close on thee;
And then, Sophian 's Governor of Mecca!

(*Going to the side.*)

My gallant kinsmen, Caled and Amrou,
The jewels of our army.

(*Enter Caled and Amrou.*)

Hail, my friends!
Aught of Mohammed?

Amrou. As we passed the house
Where gentle Fatima, Mohammed's daughter,
Makes maiden music, — thinking to obtain
A glimpse of her reputed loveliness,
We paused awhile: when, as we stood, her cousin
Ali, the fiery son of Abu Taleb,
Marched proudly by us, stepping loftily —
Thought in his eye, and thunder on his brow —
And vanished through the door.

Soph. He must have come.

Am. Or else — well!

Soph. Caled, have you marked, of late,
The sudden change in this Mohammed's manner —
How sternly through the Caäba he sweeps,
Frowning upon our venerated idols,
Nor bowing e'en before the agate shafts
Of purple Hobal?

Caled. I have marked him oft,
And thought contempt, instead of reverence, lurked
Within his eye.

Soph. And, Caled, did the sight
Not send the indignant blood against thy cheek?

Cal. No, or it would have quickly sent my hand
Against my sword: but I am more offended,
When, stiff with majesty, he stalks along,
Hugging himself in solemn dignity,
As if, perforce, he mingled with mankind,
And spurned us, to commune with some wise god
Within him.

Am. Lo! Mohammed's bondsman, Zeid.

(*Enter Zeid.*)

Zeid (*bowing.*) Masters, Mohammed asks you to his board,
Before an hour has passed; for he has tidings
Deeply affecting you, and full of joy.

Cal. I shall attend.

Am. And I.

Soph. Not I, by Heaven!—
I've done with aught that smacks of Hashem's blood. (*Exit Zeid.*)

Am. Nonsense! Mohammed never injured you;
Let Hashem and Ommeya fight it out,

With bones and ashes, in the other world:
Our ancestors should not control our tastes.

Cal. "Deeply affecting us, and full of joy"—
What tidings these?

Am. Of mines of gold, perhaps,
Discovered in Mount Hara. Come, Sophian!

Soph. I tell thee, no: his condiments would choke me!

Am. We 'll give you decent burial.

Cal. Do not fret him.

Am. Well, Heaven be praised, my gullet 's not so tender.[4] (*Exeunt Caled and Amrou.*)

Soph. Ay, let them feed and drink!—high-reaching thoughts
Shall pamper my ambition. There 's young Ali,
A vain, romantic fool—a doting lover,—
Too young to care, too weak to scheme for power,—
And mad Mohammed, whose ignoble soul,
Incapable of soaring, never felt
Ambition's goad,—these are my only rivals:
With Caled and Amrou on either hand,
I feel already governor elect![5] (*Exit Sophian.*)

SCENE III. *Apartment at Mohammed's — a table set for dinner, containing simply a lamb and a bowl of milk. — As the scenes part, Mohammed is discovered between Ali and Fatima, who are kneeling on the right and left, each with a hand in his.*

Mohammed. Now, while the heavens are listening — while the tree,
Whose tuneful leaves perpetual music shed
O'er Paradise, is mute, — pronounce again
Those blessed words!

Ali and Fatima. There is no God but One, —
Mohammed is his Prophet!

Moh. Lo! the ranks
Of white-winged Cherubim incline their heads,
To drink these accents. Rise, my children, rise!
(*They rise.*)
My cousin Ali, if I read aright
Thy ardent soul, my daughter Fatima
Will make the roseate earth a fitting path
To that sweet heaven I promise thee; but faith
Alone deserves, and faith alone can win her.
(*Raising her veil.*)
Dost love her, Ali?

Ali. Love her! — life has been
One tribute to her! Is there in the past
A thought that was not of her? — can the future

Reflect a wish that is not burning for her?—
O, Fatima!

(*As Ali springs towards her, Mohammed drops her veil, and steps between them.*)

Moh. (*to Fatima.*) Rejoin thy mother, child,—
Apply some cooling balsam to her brow;
'T was aching when I left her.

(*Exit Fatima. Mohammed paces the stage.*)

It is time
Our guests were here. — If they should mock me, cousin —

Ali. My scimitar shall cleave the mocker's head!

Moh. Nay, generous boy; not thus a prophet proves
His inspiration; not by vengeful steel
Must Islam triumph, but by charity,
Meekness and patience, kindness, hope and faith.
Spirit of Light! Eternal Unity!
Why hast thou chosen one so impotent
To be thy servant? Breathe into my soul
Part of thy power; assist my nothingness;
Light this congealéd blood; inflame my soul;
Steel me 'gainst human fear and human love!

Behold — I stand against the world, — alone![6]
Alone! (*Looking fixedly at Ali.*)
Ali. No! not alone whilst Ali lives.
May my arm shrivel like a burning scroll,
May my tongue blacken in my putrid mouth,
May each firm limb, that now exults in youth,
With ulcers fester, and with palsy shake,
Ere I desert thee!
Moh. O, my son! my son!
Thy faith exalts thee o'er the angels.

(*Enter Zeid.*)

Zeid. Master,
Thy guests approach thy threshold.
Moh. They are welcome;
Conduct them hither. (*Exit Zeid.*)
How our friends will stare,
When, entering, they perceive a bowl of milk,
And one selected lamb, their sole refreshment![7]

(*Enter Zeid, ushering Abu Taleb, Abubeker, Omar, Caled, Amrou.*)

Abu Taleb. Welcome, my nephew, from thy dark retreat,
Welcome to Mecca and thy uncle's arms!

Moh. (*embracing him.*) Thanks, noble Abu Taleb!

A. Tal. And thy wife,
Cadijah — is she well?

Moh. A sudden fever
Burned in her veins this morning; but the cool
And tender touch of night will banish it.

A. Tal. She is too delicate a plant to feel
Fever's Simoom-like breath.

(*He turns to Ali, as Mohammed welcomes the others.*)

What brought my son
So swiftly here?—Aha! the proverb 's true,
That love can make the eager foot of youth
Fleet as the horse of Nejed.[8]

(*Mohammed advances, in a reverie.*)

Omar (*to Abubeker.*) How his brow
Labors with thought!

Moh. (*waking up.*) Thrice welcome, noble guests!
I miss Sophian. (*He relapses into the reverie.*)

Abubeker (*to Omar.*) How his bosom heaves!

Om. Mark me, — there 's something great within
the man,
Struggling for utterance.
Amrou (*to Caled.*) Caled, have you seen
Our entertainment — sheep's meat on a dish,
And cow's milk in a bowl? I *am* afraid
Of choking.
Caled. Do *you* see Mohammed?
Am. (*shaking his head.*) Mad!
A. Tal. Mohammed! Nephew! What oppresses thee?
Speak! Art thou sick? — Mohammed!
Moh. (*starting and recovering.*) Well! — forgive me,
For there are shapes that flit before my view,
Invisible to ye. But come and share
A primitive repast.
(*Mohammed conducts Abu Taleb to the table; the rest follow, with Ali. They sit, at a gesture from Mohammed.*)
The feast, to-day,
Is for the spirit, not its clay companion.[9]
I offer you no soul-subduing wine,

Nor grape, nor olive from the groves of Yemen,
Nor meats enriched with spices that once flung
Their gay aroma o'er the Indian ocean;—
(*He rises.*)
I offer you what gold can never buy,
Or sabre win, or prince or priest bestow—
Islam and Eden! (*They all spring up.*)
Hear me, sons of Adam!
The angel Gabriel in Mount Hara's cave
Appeared, last night, and thundered in mine ear,—
"Go, Prophet of the true and only God,
Announce to man the glory of thy Master!"
And here, obedient to that voice divine,
Now, while his touch immortal thrills my soul,—
Now, when a power supernal drives me on,—
I call you to the service of the true
And only God! Renounce your lifeless idols!
To Allah turn, and quit your mummery!

A. Tal. Blasphemer, cease!

Moh. Will any here consent
To be my brother and my vizier? (*A pause.*)
None? (*Looking at Ali.*)

Ali. Yes, glorious prophet, I will be thy vizier!
Woe to the man whose recreant arm or voice
Is raised against thee!

Am. Pigmy thunder!

Ali (*approaching him menacingly.*) What!

Am. Durst thou thus menace me with kindling eye? (*Grasping the hilt of his scimitar.*)

Ali. Yes, if thou disbelievest!

(*They draw. Mohammed and Abu Taleb interpose.*)

A. Tal. Ali, hold!
Amrou, the Governor of Mecca asks
Thy patience.

Am. Keep thy son within due bounds,
Or he may tempt me to forget his youth,
And thy commands.

Moh. Remember, dearest Ali,
We must rejoice in insult, not resent it.

(*They put up their swords.*)

A. Tal. Mohammed, I am stunned: thy mind, I fear,
Upon the very brink of madness totters.
Alas! is reason out forever?

Moh. No!—

But Allah's new-born light has taught my soul
To soar above your childish superstition—
Your mental prostitution. Reason quenched?—
No, by the book of fate, it just begins
To burn!

A. Tal. Then, canst thou ask us to fall down
And worship thee?

Moh. Not *me*, but HIM who sends me.
I do not say, this mortal flesh is rich
With God's own essence and angelic ichor,
Or cry, "My right hand holds the key of heaven!"
I claim not to have scanned the hidden things
Locked in the eternal breast;—I ask but this,—
Believe what is revealed.

Am. Revealed to whom?

Moh. To me.

Am. To thee?—but there must also be
A revelation unto us, that there has been
This revelation unto thee; or else
Perform a miracle, and prove thy mission.
For instance, bring to life this roasted lamb,
And send it bleating to that bowl of milk.

(*They laugh.*)

Moh. Laugh on—I bend my head submissively.

Since time began, the prophet's foot has pressed
The thorn,—and curses greet him from the lips
He came to bless. But tremble while ye laugh,—
The past is fearful with the scoffer's doom.
You ask for miracles: if Allah wills
That light should reach your hearts, no miracle
Is needed; but if, wounded by your pride,
He wills it not, though troops of angels came,
Refulgent in celestial drapery,
To win your faith, ye still would disbelieve:
E'en if they built a ladder to the skies,
Ye would not climb, suspecting sorcery.

(*He goes into the reverie.*)[10]

A. Tal. Urge him no more: it may prolong this fit.

Om. And let us leave him in respectful silence.
If he be mad, 't is manliness to spare him;
If sane, we should reflect before condemning.

Am. My lips are sealed. What dost thou gaze at, Caled?

Cal. (*looking at Mohammed.*) At that majestic face, rebuking insult.
If this be madness, 't is a noble thing.

(*Exeunt Omar, Abubeker, Caled and Amrou.*)

Moh. (*to Zeid.*) Go, tell Cadijah to array our daughter
In robes of virgin-white; and, if her brow
Be cooler, say we ask her presence here,
Together with her child. (*Exit Zeid.*)
[Heaven send them soon!] (*aside.*)
My cousin Ali, while thy heart still glows
With fervor, borrowed from immortal fires,
Devote thyself to thy Creator!

(*Seizing Ali's hand.*)

A. Tal. (*tearing their hands apart.*) Hold!

Moh. Beware, rash man! thwart not the will of Allah.

A. Tal. Is it that ye are mad, or that my vision
With some absurd delusion cheats itself?
Thou art not my nephew—nor is this my son—
Or, being so,—I am not Abu Taleb!
Mohammed, drop this sacrilegious mask—
Repent this plain imposture!

Moh. Abu Taleb,
Rescind thy compact with the mocking demons,
That hold their revels round your hell-born idols.

A. Tal. My Ali, canst thou steep these wintry hairs
In deeper sorrow than they ever knew?
Canst thou condemn these pale and withered lips,
That kissed thy cradle, to unuttered shame?
Canst thou make fountains of these aged eyes,
That looked to thee to wipe away their tears?
Canst thou inflict upon the failing limbs,
That gave thee life and strength, a hideous palsy?

Ali. O, father, spare me!

Moh. Ali, is the curse
Of man more fearful than the wrath of God?
Is filial anguish worse than endless torture?
Wilt thou insult thy God to spare thy sire?
Condemn thyself to everlasting flame,
To save thy father from mistaken grief?

(*Enter Cadijah, leaning on Fatima, who is veiled and attired as a bride.*)

Remember, thou hast pledged thyself to me—
Behold the witness!

(*He lifts the veil from Fatima's face.*)

A. Tal. (*pointing to Ali.*) Ay, behold the victim!

O! Ali, Ali, has it come to this?
Dost thou renounce the love that gave thee life,
To win the kisses of a blooming girl?
Can peace and happy issue crown your union,
When thou dost send me childless to the tomb?

Moh. (*joining their hands, and imposing his on their heads.*) My son, receive thy bride!—
Though mortals frown,
And with envenomed tongue invoke the prince
Of hell to curse this holy consummation,—
Yet angel hands are lighting countless tapers,
Are strewing Paradise with dewy flowers,
Are waking all the harps of Heaven at once,
In rapturous symphony,—and viewless wings
Around your couch will hover, and keep guard,
Whilst Allah's smile, like softest perfume falling,
Will bless your slumbers and prolong your loves!

A. Tal. (*interposing.*) Give way!

(*They fall back.*)

(*To Mohammed.*) Did I not cherish thee, before
Thy foot grew firm beneath thine infant weight?

Moh. (*kissing Abu Taleb's hand, reverently.*)
When death dissolved my mother's last embrace,
I fell into thy arms, — and found a parent.

A. Tal. And is my recompense these scalding tears, —
This bleeding heart?

Moh. Bear witness, Thou, whose eye
Numbers each leaf that falls — each particle
That slumbers in impenetrable darkness, —
I would consent to bear the keenest torture
By subtle Jew or cunning Greek devised,
Rather than force from these dear eyes one tear.
But now — the man is lost within the prophet, —
The voice of Allah is my only will;
Before his high command, all earthly ties
Melt like the morning mist; and though his hand
Crush my bruised heart with all its best affections,
Still, with a harrowed breast and tear-worn cheek,
I 'll stagger through the wreck of human feeling,
And, toiling upward, scale the mount of God —
Fulfil my mission, and obtain my crown!

A. Tal. (*embracing Ali and Fatima.*) I meant to curse; but I am weak with age

And love. My children, may the ancient gods,
Who watch o'er Mecca and its holy Temple,
Who brought your childhood to maturity,
Who bade the fountain vivify the desert,—
May these benign protectors shelter ye,
And with their benefits compel your worship.

Moh. (*advancing, and again spreading his hands over Ali and Fatima.*) Eternal Allah, let sincerity
Atone for blasphemy; and, in thy mercy,
Forgive his ignorance, reward his love!

(*Curtain falls.*)

ACT II.

SCENE I. *Sunset. — Temple of Mecca. — A group of Arabs, clad in the white ihram, kneeling before the statue of Hobal, which is enclosed in a rich pavilion. — Enter Mohammed through the gate of Bab Abbas in the back-ground, in his green mantle. He stands awhile, with his arms folded, gazing at the idolaters.*

Mohammed (*laughing scornfully.*) Ha! —

(*The Arabs start up.*)

I could laugh to see ye prostitute
Immortal souls before that soulless agate,
Did not the recollection of the doom
That bursts with death upon the idolater
Shake my pale cheek, and steep my heart in gall.
O, men of Mecca! I have wept for ye,
Until the fountains of my eyes are dry! —

(*Enter Abu Taleb, from behind, unobserved.*)

How long must I entreat ye, with a smile —
How long must I command ye, with a frown —
To listen to the God who wields my tongue?
Kiss the celestial stone, by Gabriel brought

From Paradise, and laid at Abraham's feet, —[1]
Drink of the spring that scooped its basin here,[2]
When Hagar, with her infant in her arms,
Fell fainting in the desert, and the sands
Turned 'neath her lips to water, — but, if men, —
If reason sparkle in the rebel mind,
Where Heaven enthroned it, — crouch not, like the brute,
Licking the feet of this accursed idol!

Abu Taleb (*advancing.*) Ye men of Mecca, by your general vote
Invested with unsought authority,
I warn ye, shun Mohammed's impious voice!
Our gods are kind enough; we need no others.
They make our camels fruitful; clothe our steeds
With strength and swiftness; teach our fields to bloom
With vines and herbage, and the mellow date;
Invest our wives with loveliness, and power
To reproduce their virtues and our own; —
Be grateful!

Moh. Yes, be grateful; but transfer
Your gratitude to Him who merits it.

'T is *Allah* makes the earth your bed, and Heaven
Your canopy; from Him the rains descend,—
Wake the dead clay to verdure and to life;
'T is Allah's breath impels the freighted bark,
His guiding stars direct her midnight prow;
'T is Allah moves the spheres in harmony,
And drives the fiery sun through endless space,
Diffusing radiance o'er the universe;—
Allah, whose angels chase the pregnant clouds
With twisted sheets of fire,—Allah, who arched
The blue illimitable firmament,
And swung it sparkling in the orient air,
Its only pillar his supporting hand;—
The pealing thunder celebrates his praise,
The living bolt proclaims his majesty!
THIS is the God who claims your gratitude,
Whose word alone from nothing drew the heavens,
Earth, man and angels. Mortals, choose between
His Prophet and your Governor—between
A throne with Moses, and a pit with Eblis.

A. Tal. Beware!—the pity of our outraged gods
May turn to vengeance.

(*Sophian enters, unobserved, from behind.*)

Moh. Have I not declared
That Allah shelters me, — that all the arts
Of man or demon cannot harm one hair
Around my temples? — Look! — I laugh to scorn
Your idols and their vengeance! — Bring them all —
Men, eagles, lions, antelopes, — count out[8]
The full four hundred — pile the monsters here, —
And, if ye shrink not from the experiment,
I 'll set them, one by one, beneath my feet,
And spurn the helpless mass!

Sophian (*advancing.*) And then, forsooth,
Thy cry would be, — "Come, worship me, — Behold,
Mohammed 's greater than your deities!"
Children of Mecca, listen, while I prove,
By his own method, that the least among you
Surpasses Allah. (*Turning to Mohammed.*)
I defy this Allah! —
Reject his mercy and despise his power;
Render him visible, and I will scorn
Thy Allah, as I scorn his Prophet!

(*During this defiance, Mohammed appeals to Heaven, with uplifted hands.*)

Moh. Spare!

Fountain of mercy, spare him!

(*He turns to Sophian.*)

See! — my prayer
Has stayed the avenging lightning, as it leaped
From Azräel's uplifted hand, which else
Had stretched thee at my feet, a blackened corse!

Soph. Thou arch impostor!

Moh. Canst thou not employ
More fittingly the life my prayers preserved,
Than thus, in coarse abuse of him who saved it?

Soph. This passes credence; — who consigned my life
Unto *thy* keeping?

Moh. Thou — by blasphemy!

Soph. Dost dream to mask thine impotence to take it
With the soft veil of mercy? — to conceal
Maddened ambition 'neath the downcast lids
Of cold humility?

Moh. Ha! ha! Sophian
Begins to fear the simple Hashemite.

Soph. Fear thee! vile composite of Jew and Christian?[4]

Moh. Now, by Abdallah's bones, thy lying lips
Shall bleed for this.

(*He advances, with clenched hand, against Sophian, who recoils a pace or two, drawing his scimitar.*)

Soph. Come on! —

Moh. Forgive me, Allah!
Quench the last spark of pride that still survives,
Till smiles alone give answer to the taunts
Of this Ommeyite! See! I drop my *hand!*
Replace thy *sword.* Once, ere the angels' touch
Linked me with Heaven, thy heart had answered this,
By purpling half my scimitar; but now,
Instructed to forgive, I bless thee!

Soph. Coward!

Moh. (*turning on him, and as Sophian recoils.*)
Hero!

(*Exit Sophian, with a gesture of vengeance.*)

A. Tal. My nephew, 't is a desperate game:
Thy foot is on the quicksands — I mistrust
That fierce Ommeyite.

Moh. Were he ten times fiercer,
And I bereft of Allah's crystal shield,
Still would I brush him from me, as the lion
Repels a dog.

A. Tal. I know thy valor well:
But what can one strong arm avail against
The family of Ommeya, leagued with all
The Bedouin tribes and citizens of Mecca?
Such odds may make the bravest tremble.

Moh. Tremble?
Why, uncle, when a boy, before I knew
'T was womanly to fear, I never trembled.
'T is difficult to learn that female vice,
When manhood hangs its honors on my chin,
When angels guard me, and when God inspires.
Tremble?—By Allah, no! Of every friend
Deprive me, and of every earthly weapon
Rob me, then chain me to my native sands,
Helpless and lone, and there encompass me
With Grecian phalanx and the serried ranks
Of proud Parviz, methinks I could admire
The bristling legions, as they raised their spears
To pierce me.

A. Tal. Still, reflect.

Moh. Reflect? — I *have* —
Reflected, and determined: though I saw
The poignard at my throat — though Eblis lowered
With all the hosts of hell — though Allah's self,
To test my faith, the sun and moon should hurl
Against me, — 't were in vain — I could not falter!

A. Tal. The gods preserve thee, then!

Moh. May God — there is
But *One* — preserve *thee*, noble Abu Taleb!
O, uncle! foster-father! friend! my breast
Is heavy with the wish to save thy soul.
To Allah give the matchless heart he laid,
Rich with each generous impulse, in thy bosom;
Obey the Prophet, and command thy son.

A Tal. Entreat me not; I am as firm as thou.
I know not whether Allah, as thou sayest,
Or fancy, fraud, or reason, shapes thy course; —
But I have lived the life our fathers led,
And I will sleep with them, whate'er their lot:
I would not separate my fate from theirs,
To bask forever in thy Paradise.
But fortune frowns on thee, and I will share
Thy sorrows here, though not thy joys hereafter.[5]

4 (*Exit Abu Taleb.*)

Moh. (*looking after him.*) My first, best friend;
thy native worth suffices
To lift thee where religion carries few.
Gaunt Time flies heavily, and well he may,
His wings are laden with my fate and Mecca's.
The moments which so lightly pass o'er others
Prepare for me the banquet of success —
Or an impostor's grave. Omniscient God,
If I have tampered with thy awful name,
And feigned communion with thy majesty, —
If I have falsely worn the Prophet's mantle,
And falsely sworn to be thy messenger, —
'T is to reclaim the erring soul of man,
To fix his longings on thy deathless beauty,
To wipe the stigma from Arabia's brow.
I am not an impostor! — in my youth
I sought and found — now love and worship thee.
To-night decides my fate: refuse thine aid —
But, Allah, curse me not! and, if I bring
A nation to adore thee, shall I not
Deserve the splendid title I usurp,
And *be* the Prophet I *pretend* to be?[6]

(*Exit Mohammed through the gate behind.*)

SCENE II. *Mecca — early evening. — Apartment at Mohammed's. — Enter Cadijah, leaning on Fatima.*

Cadijah. Has Ali gone for Abubeker?

Fatima. Yes.

Cad. Untie this scarf—it chokes me:—there.

Fat. Sweet mother,
Shall I command thy couch?

Cad. Thy infant bed
Was on my bosom; now, thy woman's breast
Shall be my pillow: I am better thus—
The liquid breeze of night revives me. Hark!
I hear Mohammed greeting Abubeker.

(*Enter Mohammed, Abubeker, Ali.*)

Mohammed. Leap, my glad heart! Sweet mistress of my soul,
Thy head, unpillowed and erect again,
Shall droop no more till— (*He kisses her.*)
Hell!—thy lips are fire.[7]
In Allah's name, what lured thee from thy bed?
Hot as Orion, in thy thrilling veins
The fever flames.—Return!

Cad. For once, permit

Thy servant to resist thy will. My brow
Is calmer, circled by this changing air,
Than pillowed to the couch it sears.
(*To Ali.*) My son,
The moon is deluging the vale of Mina
With molten silver: Fatima, thy cheeks
Have lost their roses o'er the burning flush
Of mine: go, light them at the stars, and breathe
The freshened fields.

Ali (*aside to Fatima.*) They would converse alone. (*Exeunt Ali and Fatima.*)

Cad. (*to Abubeker.*) Need I remind thee of those blissful days,
When hand in hand our merry youth we passed,
And roved and sported, laughed and wept together,
To melt thy soul?

Abubeker. No! no! by Zemzem's waters,[8]
I yet remember, and can feel the past.
Our sires were brothers, and our mothers, friends:
Affection's spicy hand embalmed those ties,
And age may mellow, but decay they cannot.

Cad. Then, by those ties, I supplicate thee now!

The chilly touch of death will quickly cool
My burning flesh.

Moh. Hence! Hence! Why torture me
With these delirious words? why linger here,
Inviting death by mad exposure? Nay,
Love, to thy pillow! I will watch and pray
Beside thee, and refresh thy lips with mine.

Cad. Not yet: a wife's redeeming love, at times,
Makes disobedience virtue. Abubeker,[9]
Like the poor bird expiring on its nest,
Life perishes when love is needed most;
My soul stands pluméd for another world,
And when, uncaged by death, I fly from earth,
Mohammed, well-nigh friendless, must contend
With stratagems and perils, swarming thick
As locusts. Shall I make thee heir to that
As much surpassing all my current wealth,
As yonder full-orbed moon the meanest star?

Abub. What is it? — speak more plainly.

Cad. A WIFE'S LOVE!
Shall it, with me, lie withered in the tomb,
Or, unextinguished, still survive in thee?

Thy birth, thy virtue, wealth and influence,
Can cheer Mohammed for Cadijah lost,
And manly valor and affection fill
The vacant niche of feminine devotion.
Dost thou accept it?

Abub. I shall never harm him.

Cad. Cold words—cold words; but wilt thou ever love him?

Abub. I will confer with Omar.

Cad. Ask thy heart:
An honest impulse is the best adviser.
Ah! I can urge no further—love itself
Is mute, as death advances. Here—come closer—closer—
And let me read thine eyes:—yes—yes—I trust thee!
And when I moulder in the silent grave,
Remember that the playmate of thy youth,
Who loved thee as a darling brother, rose—
Rose from her death-bed to secure thy favor,—
Remember that her dying charge to thee
Made thee her husband's guardian.

(*She sinks in Mohammed's arms.*)

Moh. Oh! if aught
May kindle envy in the eternal breast,
'T is he for whom this miracle of love
Is offered!—Abubeker, pardon me.

Abub. I waited but thy signal to retire.
(*Exit Abubeker.*)

Moh. Thou erring angel, rash but sainted wife,
I know not whether to adore or blame
The victim of excessive love.

Cad. Mohammed,
Torn from thee here, in Heaven I wait thy coming.
Awhile wilt thou lament me; but my eyes
Have lost their bridal lustre, and my lips
And paler cheeks no longer glow with youth's
Carnation blushes. Some fair girl will change
Thy tears to sunshine o'er Cadijah's grave,
And maiden purity and loveliness
Supplant the memory of her cold embrace.

Moh. Never, by Heaven! though angels brought the light
Collected from the concentrated glances
Flashed by the maids of Mecca—or the world—
To dry my tears!

Cad. Death has no pang but this —
To leave thee just as danger rides the gale,
Just as the treacherous sea, where many a year
We calmly floated, threatens to o'erwhelm
Thy solitary bark!

Moh. (*looking to Heaven.*) The foaming sea
On Pharaoh, not on Moses, will exhaust
Its fury. There 's an unseen sword that guards me.

Cad. Thy foes will scarce respect invisible
Protection.

Moh. Visible destruction, then,
Awaits their blindness. Know that I have won
Two nobles of Medina to the faith, —
Saad and Osaid, illustrious names.
To-night, upon the hill of Al Akaba,
With Allah's help, I meant to wring from them
A sanctuary in Medina. But,
I will not quit thy side: a safe retreat
Is but superfluous caution.

Cad. Say not so!
Go — and I live! Remember thine own phrase —
"Man must coöperate with God, or perish!"
Go — I will run to welcome thy return.

Look — I can stand alone — my tongue receives
Its wonted moisture; and the burning wreath
Drops from my brow, and leaves it cool and damp.
Lose not a moment — go!

Moh. But moderate
This haste: not before midnight do we meet, —
'T is, by the stars, an hour or more too soon.
At last — this way. What — not accept my arm?

Cad. (*declining it.*) Saad and Osaid, I lean on you![10]

(*Exit Cadijah, unsupported — Mohammed follows.*)

(*Reënter Ali and Fatima.*)

Ali. Did I not say thy mother would not need
Thy care, sweet Fatima? yet ere the moon
Moistened our shadows in the velvet grass,
Thy back was turned upon the nightingale,
Who sung to greet thee, and complains deserted.

Fat. I am too young a wife to put aside
The daughter, — but if still the vale enchant,
Come, since our parents are engaged, we may
Resume our walk, revive the nightingale,
(*Mocking him.*)
And count the sympathetic stars.

Ali. No, no:
Fair rose of Irem, from thy chamber window
That sweet arithmetic is just as easy.
There can we watch the angels driving back
The rebel spirits with opposing meteors,
Comfort the nightingale, imbibe the dews,
And, at thy mother's call, attend her.

Fat. (*petulantly.*) No!
Thou canst not love me, being opposite
To all my wishes. When I said return,
Thou didst oppose it; now, I change my will
To suit thy humor, and thy adverse whims
Still thwart me.

Ali. Spend thy malice, love!
The wine-press draws not from the grape of Tayef [11]
Such nectar as thy honied lips extract
From curses.

Fat. Ah! if fickle in thy tastes,
Thy love, I fear, will prove inconstant too.
Perchance the scattered relics of thy heart
Alone are mine. Hast thou not often loved,
And elsewhere rendered homage?

Ali. Yes. (*Fatima starts.*)

I loved — the ground — thy tiny foot endeared it;
I loved the sky — thy liquid glance was on it;
I loved the air — thy glowing lips inhaled it —
And oft I clasped it — thus, — for mimic fancy
So multiplied thee, that thine airy image
Filled up the welkin.

Fat. Didst thou oft embrace
My shadow?

Ali. Ay, as often as I breathed.

Fat. My shadow, then, was dearer than my substance.

Ali. Yes, for I only had the shadow then.

(*Exeunt Ali and Fatima.*)

SCENE III. *Midnight. — Hill of Al Akaba, a league from Mecca. — Enter Saad and Osaid, muffled in cloaks and armed.*

Saad (*looking stealthily around.*) There may be spies around us, Osaid:
Of late, the Meccans watch us very closely.

Osaid. Our visits to the Prophet have alarmed
Their jealousy.

Saad (*starting.*) Was that a step?

Osa. If so,
I hope 't is his.

Saad. He should be here: 't is midnight.

Osa. Haste boots him little, Saad, since we hang
As unresolved as when we saw him last.

(*Mohammed, unperceived by them, enters from behind, in his green mantle.*)

Saad. His bearing must decide us: should he sue
Like one whose fate depended on our smiles,
I will not jeopard life in his behalf;
But if he ask, in calm indifference,
Perchance—

(*Mohammed steps between them: they fall back in alarm.*)

Moh. The skies are smiling on our meeting:
How regally the moon disdains that cloud!

Saad. Thus undisguised?

Moh. A prophet scorns disguise.

Saad. Thou mayest be dogged.

Moh. By angels.

Saad. Watched.

Moh. By Allah.

Osa. But wherefore thus unarmed?

Moh. What need of armor

To sheathe the limbs the eternal fiat makes
Invulnerable? Nobles of Medina,
If Allah, in his mystic providence,
Compel his servant to abandon Mecca,
Have ye a temple for him at Medina?

Saad. The question is more weighty than thy tone
Imports. In harboring thee, we shall direct
The spleen of Mecca 'gainst our weaker city.

Moh. And, in rejecting me, as surely earn
The curse of Allah for yourselves and issue.

Osa. It is no pleasant thing to peril life,
And lands, and goods, to shield a fugitive.

Moh. Far easier than to barter Paradise
For brief security and mundane toys.

Saad. If Allah shield thee, why solicit us
To interpose our puny mortal guards?

Moh. If Allah shield me, why thus hesitate
To trust his buckler? Nobles of Medina,
I thought you Moslems, but discover still
The taint of infidelity upon you;
I deemed ye men, but find ye shrink from shadows.
O, can ye sacrifice a golden crown

Because a briar guards it?—then farewell!
You cannot wear my laurels, if afraid
To share my trials.

(*He turns his back, and is going.*)

Osa. Hold, a moment!

Moh. (*looking back over his shoulder.*) Well.

Osa. May we not live with Allah, though afraid
To link our fate with thine?

Moh. Sweet hope, indeed—
Desert the Prophet, yet enjoy his God! (*Going.*)

Saad. If prudence guide us, will not Heaven approve?

Moh. (*pausing.*) If Heaven command, is disobedience prudent? (*Going.*)

Osa. What is our fate, if we desert thee?

Moh. (*turning and advancing.*) *Hell!*—
When, struggling up in mortal agony,
The soul emerges from your rattling throats,
Death will be rapture to your destiny!
When Israfil to judgment wakes the dead,
When, rent asunder, Heaven's disjointed arch,
Red as a rose, like ointment melts away,

And mountains scatter in the wind like wool, —
Hurried by demons down to central hell,
Your inner garments shall be kindled pitch,
Your floor, your ceiling, everlasting fire!
Your food, the sharp and bitter thorns of Zacon!
Your drink, corruption flowing from the damned!
There, deaf and dumb and sightless, shall ye creep,
Gnawing your hands in anguish and despair,
Pavilioned in eternal smoke and flame!

Saad. Yet what our gain, in hazarding for thee
Life and its present honors?

Moh. PARADISE!
In Eden, in green silk and gemmed brocade,
Resplendent, shall ye glide o'er pearls, that glance
On streams surcharged with honey, milk and wine;
Embowered in verdure and perpetual shade,
Sweet youths, invested with immortal bloom,
Shall proffer water fresh from Salsabil,
Lucent as camphor, and around you clash
Their golden goblets! But my words are weak;
I might exhaust the sea, were ocean ink,
Yet fail to number half the joys of Eden.[12]

Osa. Farewell to earth; I fix my hope on Heaven!

Saad. Prophet of God, our mansions and our lives
Are thine.

Moh. (*sternly.*) Repentance scarcely expiates
Your hesitation.

Saad. We will make amends
By firmness and fidelity.

Moh. (*seizing their hands.*) Then swear—
By Moses and by father Abraham,
By the Black Stone, by Zemzem's hallowed fount,
By the wept ashes of your sires, by all
You realize below and hope above—
That ye will cling to me, though all desert,
Through bliss and woe, defeat and victory!

Saad and Osaid. I swear!

Moh. Look not at me, but *there*—to Heaven!
And with uplifted hand invoke the curse
Of Allah to confound your traitor souls
In hell's sulphureous surge, if perjury
Rescind the oath now registered on high.

Saad and Osaid (*with uplifted hands.*) If perjured, blast us with thy curse!

Moh. Remember!

But see — thick clouds are swallowing the moon,
The wind is sighing with the distant rain.
Our compact sealed, we need not idly brave
The elements. When start ye for Medina?

Saad. The moment this approaching storm permits;
And rest assured, we'll leave no art untried
To win our citizens to welcome thee,
Should sottish Mecca wax too dangerous.[18]

Moh. (*blessing them.*) Depart in peace, and prosper! (*Exeunt Saad and Osaid.*)
Now, at last,
Off with this feigned and foreign apathy,
My swelling heart, and vent thy ecstacy!
Ha! ha! — And yet they deemed me unconcerned —
When every word was brimmed with life or death,
When my pent bosom labored like a sail
Filled by a hurricane! Ha! ha! — safe — safe!
Roar, breakers, roar! — I stand upon a rock
Ye cannot bury, whose commanding front
Shivers your crested helms. Frown, mortals, frown!
Threaten, plot, hatch, mature, attempt — and fail!

Mecca 's Sophian's, but Medina 's mine.

(*Distant thunder.*)

I hear thee, Allah, — yes, *thy* finger steeped
My tongue in eloquence — *thy* majesty
Rebuked their fear. I *am* a Prophet now!
I hail, in this success, achieved by thee,
Thy recognition; and, once recognized,
Imposture ceases. Say, thou viewless King,
Does not the man, who, rising self-impelled,
Plucks from thy throne the mantle he has earned,
Excel the infant prophet, who receives
The unmerited distinction in his cradle?—[14]
The future holds thy answer. Now, sweet wife,
I fly to thee with choicest medicine.

(*Exit Mohammed.*)

Scene IV. *Mecca — a little after midnight. — Corridor at Mohammed's. — Enter Mohammed, hurriedly — then halting and listening.*

Mohammed. Moans — moans? — that stifled
wail! — I cannot stir.
Death? — No! — This is the trembling I have seen,
But never felt before. A word — a look —

She still survives—she shall not die, by Heaven!

(*As he rushes forward, he encounters Ali.*)

'T is written on his face!

(*He buries his face in his hands.*)

Ali. Cadijah 's dead!

Moh. I know it. (*A long pause.*) When—how—died she?

Ali. Scarce the door
Had closed behind thee, when her bounding pulse
Slackened its motion, and her hollow temples
Turned cold and clammy. Feebler, feebler still,
Each moment left her: mute and motionless
She lay, unheeding us, while o'er her face
A smile crept, mingling with the shades of death.
Murmuring thy name, she died, as when in sleep
An infant droops; and o'er the placid clay
We hung, expecting death, long after death
Had sealed her lips forever.

Moh. Not forever!—
But lead me to her, there alone to watch
The vacant temple of her spotless soul.

(*Enter Fatima.*)

My daughter! (*They embrace.*)
Dry these tears with smiles — rejoice!
Thy mother lives, beatified, enthroned
With Miriam and Pharaoh's sainted wife.
The scales are falling from my eyes — behold,
The centre of encircling cherubim,
She waves the last farewell, denied me here!
Exult! the gates of Paradise revolve —
They ope — she enters!

Fatima. As thou speak'st, thy tears
Fall scalding on my cheeks.

Moh. (*covering his face with his hands.*) Yes, Fatima,
The Prophet glories — but the husband weeps!

(*He drops his head on her shoulder. Exeunt Mohammed and Fatima.*)

Ali. Well may he weep: if aught beneath the skies
Deserve a Prophet's tears, it is the loss
Of woman's love.

(*Enter Messenger.*)

Messenger. My lord, thy father's dying.

Ali. Dying! — Heaven, canst thou rob me of a father,
When all the tears I have are needed here!

(*Exit Ali.*)

(*Curtain falls.*)

ACT III.

SCENE I. *Mecca — sunset. — Square near the Temple. — Enter Sophian, clad in rich Governor's robes.*

Sophian. Well, Abu Taleb 's dead, at last, and buried;
And ere he 's cold within his cerements, I[1]
Am Governor of Mecca! I have chased
These flying honors with such headlong speed,
The shock of meeting them has stunned me.

Enter Caled.

Caled,
This rank imposture grows apace, and, like
Some nightborn monster, spreads its hundred hands,
Infecting half of Mecca.

Caled. Not a fourth.
The Prophet's warm, impetuous eloquence,
The fascination of his dauntless eye,
And lofty bearing, charm the credulous;
But still, we 're ten to one.

Soph. We dwindle daily.
The very men who lately hooted him,
Bedeviled by his Koran and his capers,
Now worship at his door. I shall not long
Be Mecca's governor, if, unrestrained,
Mohammed plays his sacrilegious pranks.

Cal. Why, what has changed you so?—a month ago,
You deemed him but a harmless visionary.

Soph. The mimicked gloss of sanctity deceived me.
The chair of state 's the Paradise he seeks;
Authority, the Allah he adores;
And all his aspirations point to that
Sole, darling object of his hopes —the power
So long exerted by his ancestors.

Cal. Were he ambitious, he had schemed for power
Whilst Abu Taleb lived: be not too quick
In nourishing suspicion.

Soph. (*ironically.*) No: we 'll wait
'Till from their ancient seats our gods are hurled,
And the astonished earth cries sacrilege.

Cal. I am compelled to smile, and yet 't is sad.
In infancy, I knelt in pious awe,
Deeming our idols heard my lispéd prayer;—
In youth, when first I stained my scimitar,
My cry was Hobal! and the hostile ranks
Seemed harvest-fields; but now — I have no god!
(*Despondingly.*)

Soph. Why, Caled?—

Cal. Yes, the vulgar herd may cling
To deities, whose majesty must brook
A fly's pollution; but my prouder soul[2]
Sighs for an object worthy of its faith.
Whose worship elevates the worshipper.

Soph. Can you not find one?

Cal. Yes—in Allah.

Soph. What!—
Mohammed's Allah?

Cal. Yes, Mohammed's Allah,
And mine, and *yours*. My reason asked an Allah
Long ere Mohammed named him. — Would I knew
A way to serve him! I am incomplete,
Dull, soulless, miserable, impotent,
While thus dissevered from a Deity.

My love is adoration — I require
An altar, not a mistress.

(*Enter Amrou, laughing heartily over a parchment containing the Mesra, or the Prophet's nocturnal journey through the seven heavens.*)

Amrou. I shall drop!
Oh, well done, Alborak! — I 'm suffocated —
Cudgeled with wonders!

Cal. Why, what now, Amrou?

Am. These miracles would break a camel's back.
Where do you think Mohammed went last night?

Soph. To hell, I hope.

Am. That 's near the mark; but hear:
In this authentic document, which I
Tore from the portal, where the Prophet placed it,
He says he galloped to Jerusalem,
Upon a quadruped, half horse, half mule,
Named Alborak — (*reads*) — "And thence, on steps
of light,
Mounted to Heaven, and saw the pendent stars
Dangling from chains of gold; a snow-white cock.
His wings with pearls and carbuncles inlaid,
Crowed loud hosannas."

(*He advances.*) Now!—(*reads*)—"The swiftest
horse
Could scarce accomplish, in five hundred years,
The distance 'twixt his crest and spurs!"—Oh!
oh!—
What a sweet crow the fellow must have had!
There 's nothing said about his hen.[4]

Soph. Enough!
It sickens me.

Am. Sicken, but hear. 'T is choice.[5] (*Reads.*)
"Adorned with seventy pair of orient wings,
An angel, of such monstrous magnitude,
That hungry eagles, launching from one eye,
Would fail in seventy thousand days to reach
The other—"

(*Sophian snatches the parchment, and spitting on it, throws it back.*)

Soph. There!—Ye guardian gods of Mecca,
These lips have sworn to punish blasphemy;
These hands shall do it!—Impious malecontent!
He dies!

Cal. Mohammed?

Soph. Ere the sun is up.

Cal. Banish him.

Soph. Banish! — Loose the artful fiend,
To rear in other sands a reptile brood
Of armed fanatics, minions of his will,
And tent his Moslems in the vale of Mina,
Thick as autumnal dates?

Cal. Well, let them come:
We 'll meet him, man to man, and horse to horse,[6]
And try his Islam by the scimitar.

Soph. I 'll try his inspiration by the dagger!
Braving my menaces, my guards, myself,
He frights the temple with his blasphemies.
If death alone can seal his impious tongue,
The gods demand his life.

Cal. They ask your patience.

Soph. And they have had it—had it all. He dies!
(*Aside.*) [Yes, for his life makes all my moments nettles;
Spite of myself, I tremble whilst he lives.]
(*Exit Sophian.*)

Cal. He 's white with rage and fear. It must not be;
Mohammed shall not perish like a dog.

Am. Prophet or hypocrite, to murder's worse
Than worst imposture.

Cal. How shall we prevent it?

Am. I'll follow him, applaud his resolution,
And play the spy; and, having learned his plot,
We'll counterplot. (*Exit Amrou.*)

Cal. I feel there is an Allah;
I would I knew Mohammed were his Prophet!
There's something more than greatness in the man,
Or is it fancy?—Help me, Great Unknown!
I'd rather be a beggar, with a God
To worship, than an emperor without one.
(*Exit Caled.*)

(*Enter Omar, in meditation.*)

Omar. The master mind directs fanaticism,
But bold imposture can alone emit
The spark it springs from. Thus, Mohammed,
Thy jugglery evokes a mighty spirit,
Which I had called in vain,—but, once upraised,
It owns my guidance and obeys my will.
Mohammed, thou hast played the Prophet well;
Now, Omar, be it thine to play the convert.
'T is time for action,—I have thought enough.

(*Enter Abubeker.*)

(*To Abubeker.*) Sophian or Mohammed?—Neutral hitherto,
We now must choose our party, or incur
The enmity of both.

Abubeker. I 'm most unhappy:
False to the dead, if I embrace Sophian;
False to the living, if I join Mohammed.

Om. False to the living—how?

Abub. By sacrificing
Myself and family.

Om. Listen, Abubeker.
(*Aside.*) [If I appear the proselyte, he follows
In downright earnest.] I have heard from those
Whose reverend hairs stood vouchers for their truth,
That at Mohammed's birth a flood of light
Enveloped Syria; that Sawa's lake,
Congealing, turned to sparry adamant;
That in the royal Persian's rocking towers
The sacred fire went out—[7]

Abub. Indeed!

Om. (*aside.*) [It works.]

Ay, more: fresh from the womb, he knelt and prayed,
Clasping his little hands devoutly.

Abub. Strange!

Om. (*aside.*) [Rather!] Shall I confess it, Abubeker?—
Behold a Moslem! Start not—ask your heart,
Is it not weary of idolatry?
You know, that as we worship in the temple,
We fear to look each other in the face,
Lest smiles betray our incredulity.
We serve our idols but to rule the people.

Abub. But can Mohammed be indeed inspired?

Om. What else than inspiration can produce
The Koran's dulcet verse?—no mortal pen
Such superhuman sweetness ever dropped.[8]

Abub. Grant him inspired, but still we peril much
In joining him.

Om. We peril nothing. Mark—
Mecca's behind the world,—in darkness cloaked,
Whilst all around is light. In Syria,
The Christian boasts his Nazarene,—while south,

The Hebrew points to Moses, and the East
Unfolds its revelations. It is time
Arabia had her Prophet too.

Abub. But is she ready?

Om. Ready and ripe: her sultry bosom teems
With Jew and Christian, mingled with her own
Swart progeny; fired by our sun, they seek
A worship more congenial to their blood;
Thus with Medina, thus with all our towns,
Save this illiterate and benighted Mecca.

Abub. But we are cast in Mecca.

Om. In the world!
What chains us here?—thy lands?—O, Abubeker,
Cling to Mohammed, and thy broad domain,
Though lost awhile, soon doubled will return;
Embrace Sophian, and 't is gone forever.
The Prophet must succeed: though now alone,
The East will soon be swarming at his feet.
Arabia blindfold climbs the pyramid,
Whose pinnacle already he has won;
His hand unseals her eyes, and lo!—she leaps
Impetuous to fulfil her destiny.[9]

Abub. Thy choice confirms the impulse of my heart,—
Cadijah's charge is ringing in my ear,—
The Prophet![10]

Om. (*seizing his hand.*) Yes, the Prophet! Live, Mohammed!—
We offer thee our faith and scimitars!

(*They are going, when Omar stops Abubeker.*)

But hold:—you have a daughter.

Abub. Yes, Ayesha.

Om. Beauteous and young.

Abub. A virgin, scarce fifteen.

Om. 'T is said her loveliness defies belief.

Abub. Her father deems her fair enough.

Om. Now, look:
Cadijah 's dead—the Prophet 's amorous;
Tell him thy daughter prays to be his wife.
Now mark the consequence: he will accept her—
Thou art Mohammed's father; in the skies,
Thy home the Empyrean—on the earth,
Thy lands and fortune his especial care!

(*Exeunt Omar and Abubeker.*)

SCENE II. *Mecca — night. — Apartment at Mohammed's. — Thurifer smoking on a table near a sofa. — Enter Mohammed.*

Mohammed. My wife, my uncle dead, and Mecca lost!
Are these thy mercies Allah?—Be it so:
I 'll not despond. When God deserts, let man
Be truer to himself. My sword's my uncle;
Ten concubines shall cheer me for one wife,
Medina's homage balance Mecca's scorn.[11]

(*Enter Zeid.*)

Has Ali come?

Zeid. Not yet.

Moh. His steed's a snail.

(*He throws himself on the sofa.*)

Fresh incense, Zeid. (*Zeid adds incense.*)
Ah, woman's smile transmutes
Our sighs to transport, and our tears to pearl.
The frankincense upon her mellow lip,
Her Maker's likeness glowing in her face,
Are virtue's inspiration and reward —
And shall be mine! Fresh incense.

(*Enter Omar and Abubeker.*)

(*Mohammed starts up, feeling for a secret weapon.*)

Friends, or foes?

Abubeker. Thy friends.

Omar. And true believers.

(*They both bow deeply.*)

Moh. Bless you—bless you!

(*He bursts into a hoarse, hysterical laugh, and falls back on the sofa.*)

Om. What 's this?

Moh. Excessive joy! I'm human, Omar;
The soul 's inspired—the heart remains the same.

(*He laughs again.*)

You found me here contending with despair,[12]
Eying the future with a reckless, wild
Indifference: my wife warm in her grave;
My uncle, Abu Taleb, dead; his chair
Filled by a foe implacable: —thus cursed,
I felt myself abandoned e'en by Heaven.

(*He shades his face with his hand,—then springs up, mastering dejection.*)

But whilst my seared and doubting spirit sunk,
The hand of Allah guided to my side
The sage whose godlike reason fitly types
The superhuman wisdom whence it sprung,
And one, whose charity alone outworths

A noble's fortune. In the flush of joy,
Let each in silence offer up a prayer;
The angel-guarded fruiting of the soul
Requires no outward motion to direct
The eye of Allah to its inner bloom.

(*They bow, in silence. Enter Ali.*)

What says Medina?—these are Moslems—speak!

Ali. Thy throne is built; and with a lover's ardor
She waits thy coming. In the cave of Hara,
Fearing to venture nearer, Osaid
Expects thee now, with coursers swift as light.

Moh. 'T is hard to leave thee, Mecca, though delay
Be fraught with death. Without a word, a sigh,
And unresisting as the dove, I saw
A demagogue, who lived by my permission,
Strip me of all my proud ancestral honors.
Then power was nothing—Islam all: I 've learned
That power is all—submission but a farce.

Om. A farce, indeed.

Moh. Too long neglected Power,
Virgin severe, precursor of my faith,

The first step in my mission is to win thee,
And as a soldier will I seek thy hand.
Islam, for thee I 've lost my native city;
Islam, for thee I 'll win it back again!
To-night, a fugitive; to-morrow—

(*Enter Caled.*)

Caled!—
Heaven, hast thou sent, to guard thy messenger,
The diamond of Arabia?

Caled. Are these friends?

Moh. Friends and believers.

Cal. Omar, *thou* a Moslem?

Om. I hold that title dearer than my life.

Cal. (*to Mohammed.*) Leave town to-night, or never see the morn;
The dagger 's at thy heart.

Moh. But cannot pierce it.

Cal. Sophian and the Bedouin chiefs are sworn
To take thy life before the sun is up.

Moh. Blind worms! they crawl towards a precipice.
(*To Caled.*) Desert these fell assassins and their idols.

Cal. They are my kinsmen.

Moh. Why reveal their plot?

Cal. Because my nature loathes assassination:
Because my bosom, with its naked flesh,
Will fence thy innocence from skulking murder.

Moh. Alas! that such a splendid soul as thine
Is lost to Allah!

Cal. Say not lost to Allah!
Mohammed, could I know thou wert his Prophet.
In peace, my Paradise were at thy feet;
In war, my Heaven encircled by thy foes.
Let me but feel I fight in Allah's name,
And, by the stars, the Caled of the past
Shall seem a lamb.

Moh. What proof wilt thou accept?
Is not the Koran, not the plighted faith
Of Omar, witness to my sacred mission?

Cal. No: ere I own thee, on the battle-field,
In single combat, must thou vanquish him,
Whose prowess mortal never yet withstood;—
Allah's ambassador must prove himself
Superior to my sword.

Moh. Too stern the proof.
Let this convince thee:—in the cave of Hara

A friend awaits me, and a courser neighs,
And morning hails me master of Medina.
An angel warned me of Sophian's plot
Before he hatched it.

Cal. Did he also tell thee
Thy foes were guarding all the avenues
From Mecca and thy house?

Moh. He did — he did!
And told me how to foil the miscreants!
(*To Ali.*) My scimitar, my Bedouin cap and cloak. (*Exit Ali.*)
Clouds may obscure, but not impede the sun;
Let mortals frown — they cannot crush Mohammed!

(*Enter Ali, with scimitar, &c. Mohammed takes the scimitar, and draws it.*)
The sword is drawn, and shall not touch its sheath
Till Mecca totters and Sophian falls!

(*He flings away the scabbard, and takes Caled by the hand.*)
Caled, the war 's begun; and ere a week,
I pledge myself to meet, in single combat,
The man whom mortal never yet withstood,
And bring him to his knee.

Cal. Then, ere I rise.
I swear to hail thee Prophet. When thy sword
Subdues my manhood, it has won my faith.

Moh. (*to Ali.*) My son, I make thee Allah's instrument
To rend the meshes of these dull assassins.

(*He takes off his turban and green mantle, puts them on Ali, and assumes the Bedouin cap and cloak.*)

Go out upon the terrace,—in the moonlight
'T is easy to mistake thee for Mohammed:
And let my mantle cheat them, till its master [13]
Escapes the city. Caled, one boon more.—
Protect my son, if they should turn upon him.

Ali. I have a weapon: *this* (*folding the mantle around him*) is shield enough!

(*Exit Ali.*)

Cal. Thy son is safe; but thou—delay no longer.

Moh. (*taking his hand.*) Farewell. Remember—on the battle-field!

Cal. The battle-field!

Moh. (*to Omar and Abubeker.*) Farewell.

Om. (*drawing his scimitar.*) We'll follow thee!

Moh. Remain, to guard your fortunes, and console
My Moslems: counterfeit neutrality,
But cherish secretly the seeds of Islam,
Endangered by my absence. Allah's grace
Shall reunite us in Medina.
(*He gives them his blessing; they bow.*) Peace!
(*Exit Mohammed behind, the others at the side.*)

Scene III. *Mecca — midnight. — Dark vestibule at Mohammed's. — Chamber at the side. — Enter Ali, disguised as the Prophet.*

Ali (*looking out through a window.*) I have misled them: as they climb the terrace,
Mohammed gains the street. (*He returns.*) The Prophet's safe.
They force the door. (*He goes to the side.*)
I hear them on the steps: —
Ay, pause and mutter! — ye shall quickly learn
The difference 'twixt a Prophet and his mantle.
(*Exit Ali into the chamber.*)

(*Enter Sophian and the Bedouin chiefs, muffled.*)

Sophian (*looking through the chamber door.*)

'T is he — I know him by his dark green mantle.
He moves not — fast asleep. (*He advances.*)
Ye mystic Powers,
Who judge between the slayer and the slain,
May the same thrust that consecrates our swords
With blood acceptable to Heaven and earth,
Consign Mohammed to the hell he fables!

(*Sophian and the Bedouin chiefs are entering the chamber, when Ali appears, encountering Sophian with drawn scimitar, beats him back, and the rest recoil.*)

Ali (*throwing off the mantle.*) Say, who are ye
that force the Prophet's chamber,
With muffled heads and naked blades? — Speak
out,
Foul, murder-boding shapes of night! Unmask!

Soph. (*discovering himself.*) Behold!

Ali. The Governor of Mecca shrunk to what? —
Which shall I say — a thief, or an assassin?

Soph. The latter, if it please thee; for, by Hobal,

We sought Mohammed's blood — and mean to have it!

Ali. What, vampires! do ye think to crush the Prophet,
When thus ye blench before his shadow?

Soph. Blench! —
Boy, let me pass, or, by Ommeya's urn,
I 'll split that braggart tongue of thine!

Ali. Advance —
And, by great Hashem's ashes, though thy tribe
May soon avenge, they cannot save thee!

Soph. Hence!
I 'll search the house — oppose me at thy peril!
Begone!

(*He advances. Ali stands firm, with lifted scimitar.*)

(*Enter Amrou.*)

Amrou (*intervening.*) Forbear, Sophian! Look, 't is clear as water:
The Prophet shed his skin to save his life;
Stuffed it with Ali to divert your scent;
And whilst you watched the counterfeit Mohammed,

The genuine escaped. Instead of dallying here,
Belching harsh thunder at a generous youth,
Pursue your quarry, else you 're baffled, cheated, —
Quick, and retrieve!

Soph. When I have taught this fool
That e'en the Prophet's skin has venom in it.
(*To the Bedouins.*) Ye who are sworn with me,
redeem your oaths!

(*As Sophian and the chiefs are encompassing Ali, enter Caled.*)

Caled. Beware the lion, wolves! — Fall back, I say! (*They recoil.*)

(*He marks a line between them and Ali with his scimitar.*)

Who crosses that, encounters this! Sophian,
I blush to see thee marshalling a troop
Against a lad whom thy unaided steel
Should lightly deal with.

Soph. Caled, tempt me not!
Art thou a traitor to thy race and faith?

Cal. Sophian, tempt *me* not, since blood, not love 's
The link between us: it may break in blood!"

Soph. Never! But let me pass. I 'll search the house
From top to bottom; then, my hot pursuit
Shall ferret all Arabia and the world.

Cal. Pass on. (*Aside to Ali, whom he controls.*)
[His search will give Mohammed time.]

(*Exeunt Sophian and Bedouins through the chamber—Ali springs to the other side.*)

Where? (*Arresting him.*)

Ali (*breaking away.*) For my wife, before they reach her chamber. (*Exit Ali.*)

Am. The Prophet's gone.

Cal. But will return: and then
We 'll have broad-daylight wars, not midnight brawls,—
The bounding steed, not murder's catlike pace.

(*Exeunt Caled and Amrou.*)

(*Reënter Ali, with Fatima.*)

Fatima. I fear to scan thee, lest some hidden wound
Startle me.

Ali. Look—I 'm bloodless as the lily.

Fat. Your clashing voices palsied my poor heart.

Wert thou in danger?

Ali. Yes, and but for Caled,

Had perished.

Fat. Perished! Ali, on my knees,

I thank thee for this perilous devotion.

Ali (*preventing her from kneeling.*) What sacrifice can man refuse to make

At such an altar!

(*High voices, and clash of arms, heard from without.*)

Fat. They have found a clew

To track my father out.

Ali. Well, let them follow;

'T is now too late to overtake. Ere morn,

Our steeds shall spurn the hostile sands of Mecca,

And bear us to Medina and the Prophet.

(*Exeunt Ali and Fatima.*)

SCENE IV. *Cave of Hara — after midnight. — Enter Mohammed, disguised as a Bedouin, with naked sword — exhausted by flight, — his garments torn and soiled.*

Mohammed. Farewell the drooping head, the
nerveless hand,
The dovelike patience that solicits scorn.
No longer shall I smile when others frown,
Bless when they curse, and soothe when they deride.
Forced from my foe-girt home, while still the graves
Of wife and uncle clamored for my tears,
Wet with the bursting of a daughter's heart, —
Life barely saved by hazarding a son, —
Farewell, Divine forgiveness! — I have fed
Too long on vengeful camel's flesh, to heed [15]
The silent beckon of thy mild blue eye.
(*He sees the crescent moon.*)
Hail, crescent moon! 't is Allah's finger brands
Thy flaming curve upon the sapphire sky,
A beacon and a symbol to his Prophet!
Hail, scimitar of vengeance! not in vain
The token flames. Henceforth, Mohammed, drop
The servile imitator, and amaze
Mankind, — a witness to the POWER of God, —
The Prophet of the SWORD! [16]

(*Enter Osaid.*)

Osaid. Why thus disguised?
Thou saidst a prophet scorned disguise.

Moh. 'T is true;
But not when dignified by God's command.
Where are the horses?

Osa. But a few steps hence,
Beside a slender stream.

Moh. Silence! stand back
Behind this jutting rock.

(*They conceal themselves behind a ledge of rocks, whilst Sophian and the Bedouin chiefs pass along an elevated ridge in the back-ground.*)

What think you, friend,
Those men are seeking?

Osa. What?

Moh. Mohammed's life!

Osa. We are but two! (*In alarm.*)

Moh. (*smiling.*) There is a third.

Osa. (*looking round.*) Who?—

Moh. (*pointing to Heaven.*) Allah!

(*Exeunt Mohammed and Osaid.*)

(*Curtain falls.*)

ACT IV.

SCENE I. *Medina — early morning. — Great audience hall in a palace gorgeously decorated. — Enter Omar.*

Omar (*looking round.*) Magnificent! Ah—
Gabriel has let fall
Some feathers plucked in Paradise, to imp
The palace at Medina. Fame announced
A triumph here; but still, I hardly thought
To find him lapped in gold so gorgeously.

(*Enter Mohammed, regally dressed.*)

Mohammed. My peerless Omar, welcome to
Medina!
Art just arrived?

Om. I scarcely have had time
To make my orisons and my ablutions.
I find the exile living like a king.

Moh. Housed like a king;—but 'neath this
silk and gold
Lurks stern austerity.

Om. (*aside.*) [And lechery.]

Moh. What news from Mecca?

Om. (*carelessly.*) Nothing of importance.
Sophian follows us with all his force,
Swearing to capture thee, or crush Medina.

Moh. How many men has he?

Om. About three thousand.

Moh. (*aside.*) [Double my utmost. Nothing of importance? —
By Heaven, his confidence outbrags my own.]

Om. (*who has been watching Mohammed.*) (*Aside.*) [Though rich in gold, I fear he 's poor in steel.]

Moh. Omar, in spite of scorn and banishment,
I love the Meccans; and I cannot see
Three thousand gallant countrymen advance
To sure destruction, without pitying
Their certain fate.

Om. (*dropping his head.*) Nor I.

Moh. (*eying him sternly.*) So confident?
An army under Caled and Amrou
Is not a water-lily, to be crushed
Between a baby's fingers.

Om. But the bolt
Of Allah shivers the defiant oak,
As easily as the daisy at its feet.

Moh. But Allah's servant?

Om. Wields his master's thunder!

Moh. Yes, and will conquer,—though Medina shrinks
At Mecca's name,—though these good citizens,
All fire a week ago, are ashes now,
And eye me coldly, with a moody shrug,
That plainly says — we 've done too much already.
Sophian's snorting trumpets will disperse
Their love! [Aha! he quails.] (*Aside.*)

Om. (*recovering.*) No — no! the blast
Will startle echoes in the frowning sky,
To send his legions howling back to Mecca.

Moh. (*aside.*) [He has a plan — he plays a part. I 'll watch thee!]
Forgive me this sharp trial of thy faith,
And share my honors, Omar. In Medina,
I reign supreme, sole head of church and state,
Whilst Islam, winged by persecution, moves
Majestically on. These kind Ansars

Half worship me,— their daughters are my sinews,
Who piously preserve each failing hair
Ay, e'en my spittle.[2]

Om. What excessive — faith!

Moh. Or love: for woman's fine but weaker soul
Must love the Prophet, to adore his master.

Om. (*aside.*) [God help our sisters!]

Moh. At Mohammed's word
A thousand scimitars will bend their points
Against Sophian; and, impelled by Allah,
They must prevail.

Om. Against the world.

Moh. The world!—

(*Aside.*) [What, Omar,—can thy hungry wisdom scent
My flitting dreams?] I was so wrapt in thee,
That love, in friendship lost, forgot to ask
Of Abubeker and my promised bride,
The fair Ayesha: are they in the city?

Om. Ayesha tarries to array herself
In seemly garments.

Moh. Richest ornament

Can ill repay me for the time it steals
From our acquaintance.

(*Enter Abubeker and Ayesha, veiled.*)

Welcome to Medina,
Most venerable Abubeker!

Abubeker. Hail,
Prophet of Allah!

Moh. Lady, pray remove
This envious curtain, and permit mine eye
To linger, where my thoughts so long have nestled.

(*Ayesha throws her veil aside, and looks Mohammed full in the face. He stands silently gazing at her.*)

Abub. She is a virgin in her fifteenth year:
A blameless daughter, may she ever prove
A faithful wife. Here ends my charge—she's thine.

(*He places her hand in Mohammed's.*)

Ayesha (*aside.*) [His ardent gaze consumes me.] (*Bending her head.*)

Om. (*aside.*) [Ha! he's hers,
And she her father's, and her father mine!
Plough on, Mohammed—Omar reaps the field!]

Moh. (*continuing to gaze at her.*) Her blushing cheek, made fragrant by her breath,
Excels the Persian rose,—her ruby lips
Mother unblemished pearls,—upon her brow
Aspiring scorn divided empire holds[3]
With soft attraction, and with every motion
New graces flutter round her buoyant limbs.

(*Enter Saad and Osaid, in consternation.*)

Saad. Sophian leads an army 'gainst the city,
With Caled and Amrou!

Moh. (*still gazing.*) Each glittering eye
Nurses a smiling soul.

Saad. On Beder's field,
Three stations hence, all Mecca now encamps.

Moh. (*still gazing.*) Her form repairs the ruin of my heart.[4]

Saad. Within an hour, we 'll have them at our gates.

Moh. (*turning suddenly towards him.*) Within an hour, we 'll have them at our feet!—
Why, nobles of Medina, would you have me
Absorbed in enemies, when Heaven presents

A friend as fair as this?—Prepare for action,—
I'll do the rest!—My wife—

(*Exeunt Mohammed and Ayesha.*)

Om. (*aside.*) [She 'll govern him.
There 's empire in her eye, and beauty guards it.]
How thy sweet girl enchanted him!

Abub. She seemed
To please him.

Om. She enslaved him. Abubeker,
The Prophet's sun is mounting;—ere a week,
He reigns in Mecca.

Abub. You are over sanguine.
He first must conquer thrice his force.

Om. He 'll do it.

Abub. Sophian 's crafty.

Om. But Mohammed 's great.

Abub. Caled 's a lion.

Om. Allah is a God!
And then—Caled 's half Moslem now: Amrou
Has too much sense to venerate an idol,
And too much tender self-regard to prop
A falling house. O'er vanquished Mecca soon
Our banner floats.

Abub. (*incredulously.*) And then—

Om. Why, torrent-like,[5]
Islam o'erspreads the desert; and before
The Prophet dies, he 's master of Arabia!

Abub. No — no!

Om. Yes — yes! And when he dies — for men,
Of his gigantic mould, die early — we,
Appointed by thy daughter, may divide
His kingdom.

Abub. (*coldly.*) I have wealth enough without it.

(*Enter Amrou, with a green palm branch, ushered by a slave bowing deeply.*)

Amrou. There — there: — don't break your back — I 'm not a Prophet.
I 'd rather see your head up than your — Ah!
(*Seeing Omar and Abubeker.*)
Most venerable Moslems, I salute ye.
(*Bowing stiffly.*)

Om. (*mimicking him.*) Courteous idolater, we thus return it.

Am. (*ceremoniously.*) Behold in me an embassy from Mecca.
Where is Mohammed?

Om. Kneeling to the *angel.*

Am. When can I see him?

Om. Pray be sociable;

He will be here anon — relax.

Am. Stand off

'Till I have decently disrobed myself.

(*He lays the palm respectfully on the floor, then rushes familiarly to Omar.*)

Well met once more! Why, by my mother's tongue,

This palace, Abubeker, looks as though

Omar's philosophy had studied ways

And means to lavish all thy wealth upon it.

What pretty plunder! —

(*Enter Saad, with the white banner unfurled at Medina, Ali, Osaid, and the magnates of Medina. They stand opposite the vacant throne.*)

Here's a gallant pageant!

Om. The Prophet's council! — Magnates of Medina.

Am. (*picking up the palm.*) Then, I resume the lost ambassador.

(*Enter Mohammed, preceded by Zeid and body-guard; who make an avenue for him at the entrance behind. He passes through them, and takes his seat on the throne, whilst Saad plants the banner so as to hang over his head. Amrou advances with great dignity and respect.*)

Who will direct me, for I would address
The sovereign power of this good city?

Magnates (*pointing to Mohammed.*) There! —

Am. The Governor of Mecca, through me, warns
Medina to deliver up a certain
Fugitive from her violated justice;
By name, Mohammed; and by trade — a Prophet.[6]

Mohammed. Proceed. And if Medina should retain
This Prophet fugitive? —

Am. Then fire and sword
Shall wrest him from her desolated bosom.

Moh. (*to Amrou.*) Fall back, and wait thy answer. Citizens, (*He rises.*)
There *was* a time when persecution met
Resigned endurance in Mohammed's soul,

That thus the baffled infidel might learn
The constancy of Truth: — but, having spurned
Her lowliness, he now shall feel her power,
And fear the Allah, whom he will not love! [7]

(*He descends.*)

How say ye, children of Medina, — War? —
War, with your Prophet, or a Peace without him?

Omnes. War! (*Their hands are heard ringing against their sword-hilts.*)

Moh. Not the desperate game, where angry nations
Baptize their honor in a sea of blood, —
But war that man requires and Heaven demands.
War, on whose burnished wings insulted Peace
Escapes the ravishment of Tyranny,
And flies to eager Liberty's embrace,
Her champion and her spouse!

Om. (*and the rest, drawing their scimitars.*) Lead on, O Prophet!

Moh. I prayed for victory; — Gabriel, smiling, said, —

" Death is decreed by fate, not circumstance.
Steel 's not the arbiter of human life,
But Allah, when assigning, limits it.

The coward, skulking in his damask bed,
Gains not a day on earth, but years in hell.
The Moslem perils nought, hemmed in by foes;
And, dying, sleeps in Eden."

Om. May our bed
This night be there![8]

Saad. Great Allah! grant it!

(*Mohammed catches the white banner from Saàd, and advances with it.*)

Moh. Come!
Ye who are for me, form around me!
(*They all form a semicircle, of which Mohammed is the centre, — slightly bowing beneath the banner, with drawn scimitars.*)
Thus —
To all who die beneath this sacred standard
I promise Eden's loftiest couches, lined
With greenest silk, impregned with gold and gems.
Around them flowering branches shall mature
Embracing fruits, and twining roses shade
Their perfumed limbs. Immortal houris — maids
Fairer than wanton fancy ever shaped,
Whose large black eyes are virgin to their lords,
Whose cheeks dissolve the ruby in the pearl,

Veiled in long locks inwreathed with beams and
flowers —*
Shall minister delight!

Omnes. The Prophet! — Allah!

Am. (*fervently.*) But for my honor, I'd cry
Allah, too.

Moh. (*returning the standard to Saad.*) Amrou,
thou hast thy answer. To the gates,
Moslems, and form your ranks! No wall must rise
Between us and the foe; — in open field
We 'll fight and conquer!

(*A clang of arms. Exeunt all but Mohammed,
to the sound of gong and tymbalon.*)

(*Enter Ayesha, unperceived.*)

Fight, and die, perhaps!
Father of light! with victory crown me now,
And, fashioned by my sword, this impious earth
Shall seem a mighty altar, where mankind,
Uniting in one universal hymn,
Echo Heaven's harmony! — And yet how oft
Our zealot fervor turns to self-devotion,
With unsuspected guile! O, can it be
Mohammed is the real God I serve?

Ayesha (*taking his hand, and gradually embracing him.*) My lord!—pray eye me not so sternly! There—

I'll kiss that frown away. Why swells this vein,
Like a blue snake?—nay, speak—'t is most unkind! (*She walks slowly away, weeping.*)

Moh. Why, child? (*Catching her in his arms.*)

Ayes. Thou wouldst not speak!

Moh. I did not see thee.

Ayes. Thy glance was full upon me.

Moh. But my thoughts!—

I was the Prophet then. What brought thee here?

Ayes. The shout, and clash of arms.

Moh. My sweet Ayesha,
I must forsake thy bosom for the corslet,
Our chamber for the tent.

Ayes. War shall not part us.
I'll follow thee 'mid flashing shield and spear,
My breast thy buckler, and my hair thy plume.

Moh. Ayesha!

Ayes. Yes. My infancy was fed
With tales of glorious war; and now mine ear

Grows merry at its music, and my heart
Pants like the champing steed.

Moh. But durst thou venture
These dainty limbs, this fleecy white and red,
Where warrior's brawn is taught to tremble?[10]

Ayes. Yes!
Do not my eyes assure thee? — read them well.

Moh. I see the lioness — the dove is gone.
Come — thou shalt see the Prophet of the sword.
Beware, Sophian! — all the gods of Mecca
Are not a match for Allah — and Revenge!

(*Exeunt Mohammed and Ayesha.*)

(*Enter Ali, armed for battle, and Fatima.*)

Ali. Weep not, my angel: it is worse than death
To witness and to cause these tears, that make
War's once enchanting visage monstrous. Cease,
Or I will break my scimitar. Oh, Heaven, —
When every bosom burned, when every eye
Flamed with fierce exultation at the thought
Of speedy conflict, as the Prophet flung
His consecrated banner to the breeze,
Ali was sad and mute, and hung his head,

For then he thought of Fatima. Farewell!—

(*As she still clings, weeping, to him, he dashes his scimitar on the floor.*)

There!—I 'll not leave thee thus, for all the houris
In Paradise!

Fatima. Ali!—I 've still a drop
Of heroism, unconsumed by love,
And with that drop I thus restore thy honor.

(*She stoops, and hands him his sword.*)

Go, fight thy maiden fight: a woman loves
Her soldier's laurels, though she dreads the fray.
And if—and if I never see thee more,
Fall so that men, when at thy grave I kneel,—
For I will be thy tombstone,—shall exclaim—
Behold a hero's widow!

Ali. No: but earth,
Ere night, shall hail thee as a hero's bride!

(*He leads her to the door behind, passes to one side, and she to the other.*)

SCENE II *Field of Beder, three stations from Mecca.—Enter Sophian, armed.*

Sophian. How all my hopes are rushing to fulfilment!

Mohammed, ere that sun has set, thy corse
Shall feed the vulture.

(*Enter Caled, armed.*)

Are my troops arrayed?

Caled. In phalanx firm, and eager to advance.

Soph. Think you Medina will defend Mohammed?

Cal. I think Mohammed will defend Medina.

(*Enter Amrou — he tosses the palm branch in the air.*)

Amrou. Farewell! (*Drawing his sword.*)

Soph. Well?

Am. Well.

Soph. What answer?

Am. (*pointing to his sword.*) None but — this!
They scorn, and come to meet us.

Soph. What!

Am. Your scouts
May see them hovering on the desert's rim.

Soph. It cannot be!

Am. It is.

Soph. His numbers?

Am. Not
A third of ours.

Soph. And, with this puny force,
Dare he o'erleap his breastworks, and attack
Where walled defence were desperate?

Am. Even so.
And hark! I warn you, be alert and wary;
Do nought in reckless confidence; for, urged
By eloquent and stern fanaticism,
Each Moslem is a hero; in their eyes
I noted fire enough to melt our armor.

Soph. We 'll put it out.
On, brothers, to the charge!
You to your posts, and I to mine. Advance!

(*Exit Sophian.*)

Cal. How looks the Prophet?

Am. As a Prophet should:
Majestic, undismayed,—as if the God
He preaches, breathed in him. Sophian's taunts,
Spurned by his regal smile, recoiled upon me.
Had you beheld him marshalling his troops,
Like Heaven-sent victory, you would, with me,
Regret the chance that points our swords against him.

Cal. Too late! too late!—for, hand to hand,
I 've sworn
To meet and conquer,—or declare him Prophet.

Am. I 've made no pledges: but on yonder field
I 'll do my utmost 'gainst him. If he fall—
May Islam perish; but, if conqueror—
Amrou 's a Moslem!

Cal. Be it so: and now,
Our swords shall put this Prophet to the test.

(*Exeunt Caled and Amrou.*)

SCENE III. *Another part of the field of Beder. — Mohammed praying before his tent in the background, wearing his green turban, with the crescent in it: he is otherwise completely armed, but the armor and weapons are concealed under a long white cloak of camel's hair. — Ali. — Ayesha, armed defensively. — Zeid and the body-guard drawn up around the tent.*

Ali (*advancing.*) O, curse this inactivity! Condemned [11]
To guard a woman, while the battle roars
A bow-shot hence, and others pluck the laurels
I cannot strive for!

Ayesha (*following him.*) What a pretty sword!

How clean and bright! — bright as thy glancing
eye.

Ali. Bright! — would it were —

Ayes. What? — out with it!

Ali Red!

Red as thy coral lips! — Forgive me, lady,
But I have promised to achieve a name,
Ere night, or perish; and the day declines,
And hark! — the contest burns, — whilst I, chained
here,
When every Moslem wields a dripping blade,
Flourish this gewgaw!

Ayes. Wouldst thou stain it yonder?

Ali. Ay, to the hilt!

Ayes. And to the hilt thou shalt!
Mark, — thou hast sworn to guard me with thy
life;
Young warrior, thou shalt find that he who guards
Ayesha fills the post of honor. Come!
Bring me back safe, and thou hast won a name
For girls to swear by. (*Exit Ayesha.*)

Ali. Hold! — stay! — whither now?
She answers not, but, beckoning, seeks the point

Where death erects his throne. I must o'ertake,
Or lose, with her, my forfeit honor. Stay!

(*Exit Ali.*)

Mohammed (*coming forward.*) Ali! my son!
—By Heaven, he heeds me not,
But hurries to the centre of the fray:
Lost in the dust.—Thus fretful youth disdains
Obedience, when the kindling spirit melts
The chain of duty. Where 's my eagle Priestess,
My dark-eyed heroine?—Ayesha!

(*He is going to the tent, in quest of her.* *Enter Abubeker, with dripping sword.*)

Well?

Abubeker. They 're ten to one!

Moh. Where 's Omar?

Abu. Everywhere:
Now, in the van, he holds Amrou and death
At bay; and now, inspiriting the rear,
Repels the falcon swoop of Caled.

Moh. Here:
To Omar with my body-guard, and tell him
To win the day without me.

(*Exeunt Abubeker, Zeid, and body-guard.*)

Is there not,
At times, foreknowledge in the heart of man —
Or, Allah, is it thy imparted prescience
That fills me with this mighty exultation,
Telling me I must conquer?—Love! Ayesha!

(*He enters the tent, seeking her; as he comes out, enter Osaid.*)

Osaid. All 's lost! O, Prophet—fly! Resistless Caled
Strides o'er our broken columns to thy tent.

Moh. (*feeling the hilt of his scimitar.*) He 's welcome! Is the banner waving?

Osa. Saad
Upholds it 'gainst Sophian and a host,
But asks through me for succor.

Moh. He shall have it.

(*He flings off the cloak, and appears completely armed, except the head.*)

Osa. Put on my helmet: thus, thou 'lt be the target
For all their arrows.

Moh. 'T will divert the shafts
From friends who else might feel them. Lead the way,—

Point out Sophian — vengeance claims me first, —
Then, Caled —

(*Enter Moslems, flying in confusion.*)

There 's the foe! Back, Moslems, back!
God and Mohammed will support you now! [12]

(*Exeunt Mohammed, Osaid, and Moslems.*)

Scene IV. *Another part of the field. — Enter Amrou, retreating before Ali. — Ayesha and Abubeker following.*

Abubeker. Stop, tigress!

(*He attempts to detain her — she breaks away.*)

Ayesha. Look, they yield! On, Ali, on!
These hands shall crown thee hero of the day!

(*Exeunt. Alarums. Enter Sophian, retreating before Omar. Enter Mohammed. Exeunt Sophian and Omar.*)

Mohammed. Eden and all its houris for thy place!
Omar, he 's mine!

(*Enter Caled, intercepting Mohammed.*)

O, rob me not of moments
That carry balsam for an age of wrong!

Five minutes to o'ertake Sophian—then, Caled,
I'll fight with thee forever.

Cal. No!

I have not hewn my way through sword and spear
To lose thee thus.

Moh. Beware! thou art no more
A noble rival, but a hated shield
Which I must pierce to reach Sophian's heart.

(*They cross swords.*)

Cal. Pause, and take breath. Thy recent charge,
That scattered us like chaff, and gained the day,
Has left thee panting.

Moh. Thou art weary too,
For half my slain weigh down thy scimitar.[13]

(*They fight doubtfully and fiercely. Enter Saad, Osaid, Zeid, with the body-guard—they prepare to attack Caled.*)

Forbear!—Who meddles here, offends the Prophet.

(*They fall back. Mohammed disarms Caled, and forces him to his knee.*)

Thy promise, Caled!

Cal. Thou hast conquered, Prophet![14]

There is no God but Allah. From thine eyes
A superhuman lustre shot, and round
Thy beetling brow a livid halo burned; —
And now, with ecstasy in every vein,
And sweet conviction streaming on my heart,
I dedicate my body, soul, and sword,
To Allah and his Prophet!

Moh. Rise, and live,
The bulwark of the faith, the Sword of God!

(*Caled rises.*)

'T is not a mortal that has vanquished thee; —
Legions of angels battled on my side,
Or else Mohammed were at Caled's feet.
(*To Saad and Osaid.*) Is Mecca at our gates? —
We 're soon at hers!
Behold thy banner, Caled, — follow me. (*Exeunt.*)

Scene V. *Mohammed's tent. — Enter Omar, exhausted, waving his bloody sword.*

Omar. Victory! I 've scarcely breath enough
to shout it.
I 'm on the winning side — idolatry
Gasps on her dark and antiquated throne,
Whilst Islam, like a bold usurper, strides

To pluck her off. I knew it must be so—
Fanaticism laughs at triple odds.
Who says that Omar 's not a Prophet too,—
The Prophet of the *Brain!* —and when my sword
Has built Mohammed up, my soaring mind
Shall use him as her footstool.

(*Enter Mohammed, Saad, with the banner, Osaid, Zeid, and body-guard.*)

Mohammed. Where 's Sophian?

Omar. Escaped.

Moh. Reserved for me.

Om. His squadrons hid him
From my pursuit; and now, in full retreat,
He makes for Mecca.

Moh. How shall I reward
The sage, whose valor, like his wisdom, reigns
Unequalled?

Om. (*bowing.*) By thy prayers.

Moh. (*aside.*) [Dark hypocrite!]

(*Enter Ayesha, her arm bound with her veil, Abubeker, Ali, with Amrou prisoner.*)

Blood!—Ali, speak!—this wound 's thy honor's grave.

Ayesha. Pshaw! 't is a scratch, just such as lovers seal [15]
Their vows with. Chide him not, for 't was his valor,
Eclipsing precedent, that wrung from death
The life I now employ to hail thee victor.
Abubeker. I found my daughter revelling in blood,
As in a bath: where'er the foe ranked thickest,
And men, forsaking hope, embraced despair,
She plunged as gayly as the roving bee
Dips in the chaliced flower, bequeathing Ali [16]
The burthen of her rashness.
Moh. Could we fail,
When Heaven fought with us in Ayesha's face?
Ali, thou hast a trophy, in her life,
To which a diamond pyramid were nought.
Ayes. (*pointing to Amrou.*) He has another.
Moh. The ambassador!
Amrou. Vanquished in single combat by this boy.
Since Islam works such miracles, I bow
To Allah and his Prophet. (*He kneels.*)

Moh. (*raising him.*) Live. (*To the Moslems.*)
And now
For Mecca, while the panic shakes her gates.
The sunbeams that we see upon her domes
Must tell the skies that they have kissed the crescent.
Advance the standard! Are ye weary?
Omnes. No!
Caled. We'll rest in Paradise! Lead on, O, Prophet!
I sacrifice, on Islam's sacred altar,
All human ties — the throe of kindred blood,
The light of friendship and the flame of love.
Lead on, where Allah wills — I follow thee!
Omar (*aside.*) [A genuine fanatic.]
Ali. I demand
The advance.
Om. 'T is mine: the van is mine, by order.
Ali. I gained it by the sword, — a better title.
Om. Unless disputed.
Moh. Cease this generous strife.
I give the lead to none: — let him who can,
Win it, and keep it. He who enters Mecca

Before Mohammed, shall behold, unveiled,
The wings of Gabriel.

(*Cymbals and gong. Exeunt Omar, Abubeker, Saad, Osaid, Caled, Amrou.*)

Ayes. (*detaining Ali.*) Let mine image shine
Before thee on the field.

Ali. My fancy moulds
No image but my wife's. (*Exit Ali.*)

Ayes. (*gazing after him.*) Thou darling boy!

Moh. (*who has been looking at Mecca, seen in the distance, turning to the body-guard.*) Protect her! — Mark me, — if a hair be harmed,
Your lives shall answer it!

(*Turning again towards Mecca.*)

My native city, —
Ill-fated Mecca! — ere that setting sun
Glasses his sceptre in the ambient wave,
Thy blood shall deepen his red glare — thy dead
Rise in a hill as high as Arafat,
Topped by thy governor! — The exile comes!

(*Exit Mohammed.*)

Ayes. What damsel would not dote on such a lord,

A sculptor's model and a soldier's envy?
And yet my heart is murmuring "Ali — Ali!"

(*Exeunt Ayesha and body-guard.*)

SCENE VI. *Mecca — sunset. — Square before the Temple. — Enter Sophian.*[17]

Sophian. Vanquished — betrayed — undone! — the golden cup
Of power, with all its sweet ingredients, snatched,
Untasted, from my lips, — and — oh, ye gods! —
To bless the palate of a rival! Ah,
Adversity makes women of us all![18]

(*He leans against the wall. Enter Bedouin.*)

Bedouin. Our only chance is flight — the gates are forced.

Soph. Flight? — can I fly from memory? — No — no!
The recollection of defeat is worse
Than death, — Mohammed's triumph, hell!
Leave me — Amrou and Caled reap success
To pamper treachery: fidelity
Deserves impunity, at least. Escape!

(*The Bedouin stands firm, with a shrug.*)

Well, stay. — Who 's that? — the Prophet, by the gods!
And unattended. Come! there 's still a chance
For life and vengeance.

(*Exeunt Sophian and Bedouin.*)

Mohammed (*behind the scenes.*) Ha! you fly in pairs.
I 'll part ye, doves!

(*Enter Mohammed, striking down the Bedouin and engaging Sophian.*)

Strike harder — harder — harder!
My scimitar shakes off thy comrade's blood,
To feast on thine! So pale? — Oh, rather blush:
I seek thee like a lover, in advance
Of all my army. Spare the Prophet, trader, —
Have pity on the exile!

(*He disarms Sophian. Enter Saad, Osaid.*)

Die, dog, die!

(*He attempts thrice to kill Sophian, then sheathes his scimitar.*)

A reptile's life 's poor vengeance for his sting, —
A villain's blood, no balsam for his insults!
Begone! the desert be thy dwelling-place;

And learn, in exile, to repent the pride
That dwarfed Mohammed, till he seemed thy rival.

Soph. (*aside.*) [O, pardon worse than death!—
There 's vengeance yet!] (*Exit Sophian.*)

Saad. What! Canst thou spare Sophian?

Moh. (*smiling sternly.*) To behold
My triumph, and to wither in its blaze,
Maddened by shame and impotent despair.

(*Enter Omar and Ali.*)

Omar. All Mecca huddles, like a flock of sheep,
Within the Temple, and our foaming troops
Expect thy signal to avenge the dead.

Ali. His silence is the signal.

(*Ali and Omar are going.*)

Moh. Moslems, hold!
An angel's whisper penetrates my heart,
And turns the fury, that achieved success,
To mercy, that deserves it. Allah asks
Repentance, not atonement, — tears, not blood.
Here was I born — here breathed my earliest prayer —
Each object bears the print of infant hours,

And, with the scenes, recalls the tenderness
Of youth.[19]
My native Mecca, I forgive thee
Scorn, contumely, banishment, pursuit,
And in the patriot's love forever quench
The exile's vengeance! Moslems—to the Temple!
Hew down the idols, not the people.
Abubeker. Ah, what compassion!
Om. (*aside.*) [Calculation!]
Moh. If
Your swords are not yet glutted—to the desert!
And death or Islam for the Bedouin tribes.
(*Exeunt Ali, Omar, Saad, Osaid.*)
Mercy to Mecca makes Arabia mine,—
I spare my country, but I 'll scourge the world!
Still in the prime and majesty of manhood,
With all the appetites and edge of youth
Unblunted,—I shall now begin to taste
The joys a Prophet should. Plucked from their thrones,
Bareheaded kings shall tremble at my feet,
And queens adorn my bed: the world shall pour

Her wealth and beauty in Mohammed's lap,
And 'neath the unsparing scimitar, confess
The Prophet, Heaven and earth accredited!

(*Exit Mohammed.*)

(*Curtain falls.*)

ACT V.

SCENE I. *Palace at Medina. — Enter Saad with the white banner, Osaid, Caled, Omar, Ali, Amrou, Abubeker, Zeid with body-guard. — Sound of gong and tymbalon.*

Omar. Again the war-horse shakes his arching neck,
And trumpets echo back his eager neigh:
The cup of triumph, quaffed at Mecca's fall,
Is empty, till the heart's blood of Damascus
Replenish it.

Caled. Too long our carnal souls,
Ensnared by pleasure and ignoble ease,
Have doted on our gardens and our wives.
And now, exultingly, I bid farewell
To gentle dalliance and the palm-tree's shade,
To toil for Allah in the burning sun,
And wrestle with the steel-clad infidel.[1]

(*Enter Mohammed, completely armed, with the standard of the black eagle.*)

Mohammed. Had monarch ever such a proud array —

Each man a hero, and each troop a host?
Damascus totters as I look on ye,
And, bruised and bleeding, renders to our arms
The homage she refused our herald. Caled,
This banner thine, and let our watchword be—
Islam or death! (*Giving him the banner.*)

Omnes. Islam or death!

Moh. Then gayly to our enterprise. But first,
Let piety invoke the aid of Heaven,
For hell 's against us. Allah, send thy angels,
Who fought with us at Beder, to infuse
Celestial vigor in our mortal sinews,
And strike another blow, to vindicate
Thy majesty and might! O, God! —[2]

(*His head drops; and he sinks, supported by Ali, Omar, and Caled.*)

Ali. My father!

Om. Mohammed!

Cal. Prophet!

Moh. (*starting, and gazing wildly round.*)
Yes!—a Prophet still! (*He rises.*)
Unhand me! Can this momentary faintness

Appal ye thus?— Hold up the standard, Caled,—
Damascus!

(*He staggers forward, beckoning them on, then falls back, fainting.*)

(*Exeunt, bearing Mohammed.*)

SCENE II. *Room adjoining Mohammed's chamber.— Enter Caled and Omar.— Enter Ayesha through Mohammed's chamber.*

Ayesha. Softly!— the opiate just begins to soothe him.

Caled. O, this is sudden!

Ayes. No—alas! Of late
Oft has he waked me, crying, Mercy! mercy!
And, by the flickering taper, I have seen
Such ghastly agony upon his face,
That, though I shrunk, all shuddering, from his side,
I feared to rouse him.

Cal. How the o'ertasked body
Writhes 'neath the mighty swelling of the soul,
When face to face with God!

Omar (*to Ayesha.*) 'T is but thy fancy.

Ayes. Fancy! O, would it were! Last night, a groan
Of mortal anguish froze my blood: I shrieked—
And then he sprung from sleep as if from torture,
And with a sigh, that filled the night with horror,
Fell back exhausted on his pillow. Fancy!—
There was no fancy in the reeking brow
He pressed to mine—so cold—so terrible!

Cal. I thought these iron cheeks had done with tears.

Om. (*aside.*) [Can this be poison?] Something must be done.
Has earth, that teems with balsam for a beggar,
No herb, no charm, to cure a royal Prophet!
Come, Caled, let us publish through the city,
A thousand purses to the man who cures
Mohammed.

Cal. Would my blood could win the prize!

(*Exeunt Omar, Caled.*)

Ayes. O, Ali! what are Paradise and Prophet?
One glance of thine surpasses both. 'T is he!

(*Enter Ali, going to the chamber.*)

Pause—he is sleeping.

Ali. Is he better?

Ayes. Yes. (*Ali is going.*)

Stay! (*She detains him.*) Dost thou hate me?

Ali. No: I fear thee.

Ayes. Why?

Pity me rather! Couldst thou see the struggle
'Twixt love and duty in a woman's heart,
Thy scorn might spare her.

Ali. Art thou not a wife?

Ayes. Wedded before she loved, who never knew
The insect's privilege, to choose its mate.

Ali. Her father's choice must bind a daughter's heart.

Ayes. But not her soul,—'t was not derived from him.
These lips were never meant to sue in vain;
These eyes not lighted to inspire contempt;
The charms to which thy father is a slave
May claim a part of Ali's tenderness.

Ali (*trying to escape.*) Away, enchantress!

Ayes. (*clinging to him.*) Pause, too dear magician,

Or hurl me in the dust! — I will not leave thee!

(*She stands before him — he covers his face with his hands.*)

Look! there's a might of adoration here,
That shames thy wife's cold homage! Dost thou fear
To trust thine eyes upon me, Ali?

Ali. Go —

Thy thrilling touch is poison! Go, Ayesha —
Leave me, in mercy's name!

Ayes. (*kneeling.*) In mercy's name,
Hear me — then spurn thy victim, if thou canst!

(*She rises.*)

On Beder's field, a young and artless girl,
I snatched thy image to my heart, believing
That I could love thee as I loved a bird.
Awhile thy beauty nourished in my veins
A tingling nectar; but, with lightning speed,
Affection grew to love, and love to madness;
And now, subdued by overwhelming fate,
Behold my last appeal![3]

(*She falls upon his neck.*)

(*Enter Mohammed and Fatima, through the chamber.*)

Ali (*without seeing them.*) Inspire me, Allah,
And make the husband mightier than the man!
(*Seeing Fatima, he flies to her.*)
Thus let me gaze into these starry orbs, —
Replenished with celestial purity,
Those chastened beams disarm temptation — thus.
Thy memory foiled Ayesha, but thy presence
Is armor 'gainst a goddess.

Mohammed (*looking at Ali.*) First, my wife —
And then my daughter!

Ali (*kneeling to Mohammed.*) Father!

Moh. (*mocking his tone.*) Son! — Begone!

Ali (*to Fatima.*) Canst thou, too, doubt me?

Fatima. When I cease to love thee.
(*Exeunt Ali and Fatima.*)

Moh. And so your love anticipates my death:
Already you begin to play the widow.

Ayes. Who doubts me, disbelieves the Koran:
Gabriel declared me pure.

Moh. Pure *once* — but *now?* —

Ayes. As pure as ever. Even were I guilty,
I never shared thy youth to nurse thine age.

Moh. This to thy Prophet?

Ayes. Yes! When man discards
The pearl of chastity, he cannot ask
His wife to treasure it. Ay, make the earth
As full of houris as thy Paradise!
Free all thy slaves, and marry all their wives!
Indulge thy lust —

Moh. 'T is my prerogative.
A Prophet's not a woman, doomed to freeze
In chaste fidelity to one poor mortal.
Away! — (*She is going — he stops her.*)
And yet, — if not in thee, Ayesha,
Where shall I soothe my agony?

Ayes. In God.

Moh. In God! — (*He starts, and turns away with a look of despair; then recovering.*)
As if I did not! — O, Ayesha!
Thy words destroy the only human prop
On which I leaned. When writhing on that bed —
(*Pointing to the chamber.*)
When, on my death-sick gaze, the past and present,

And all the future, crumbled into ruin —
The thought that I was loved by thee remained,
And, like a golden veil, transformed despair!
Ayes. I never said I loved thee not.
Moh. Alas!
'T was in the eye, and nearly on the tongue.
I thought thy smile would kill the frown of death,
Thy kisses thaw his icy dart, — thine arms ——
At least, I little deemed the darling wife,
On whom I showered the wealth of ransomed cities,
Could turn against me in infirmity,
Corrupt my dying hour with harsh abuse,
Excuse her infidelity with insult,
And force the tear that death would fail to wring!
Ayes. By Heaven, I 'm innocent!
Moh. Not long — not long
Thy bondage lasts: Mohammed may not see
Another sun! And then, Ayesha, then —
Ere I am dust, embrace a glowing boy,
One who deserves thy beauty, and forget
The mummy that profaned thy charms!

Ayes. O, hear me!
There's not a star that purifies the sky
More chaste than she whose light is from thy love!
Thou sawest him simulate the anchoret,
And cast me from him as he felt thine eye?

Moh. Yes—and I saw thee hanging on his breast.

Ayes. For he had forced me there.

Moh. It cannot be.

Ayes. As I was weeping, at the memory
Of all thy anguish, with a sudden bound,
He caught me, stunned and speechless, in his arms;
And as I trembled there, inspired by Heaven,
Mohammed entered—thou hast seen the rest.

Moh. Leave me!—my mind is frenzied with suspicion.

Ayes. (*aside.*) [Rejected beauty weds revenge. Ha! Ali.] (*Exit Ayesha.*)

Moh. 'T is so!—the horrid truth, in livid letters,
Glares full upon me—I am poisoned—poisoned!
And by my son—by Ali—to usurp

Possession of my exquisite Ayesha!
'T is poison that has struck Mohammed down,
Scorching my pinion as I neared the sun,
In the meridian of my glory,—poison!
I thought it was remorse—the curse of God—
And O! I will confess, the blow had come
More fittingly from Allah than from Ali!

(*Enter Abubeker, Saad, Osaid.*)

Saad. How is the Prophet?

Moh. Have ye dungeons?

Saad. Dungeons!

Moh. Select the darkest, and chain Ali there!

Saad. Chain Ali there!

Moh. A rock can give an echo;
But from a man, I want obedience. Go!

Abubeker (*to Saad and Osaid.*) Obey the Prophet.

Moh. Teach them how to do it.

(*Exeunt Abubeker, Saad, Osaid.*)

Remorse or poison, which?—by Heaven, I know not!
Ali, I half repent,—it is remorse!
Can poison rend the bowels of the past,

And drag out blood, and blasphemy, and lust,
And mix them with the brain? Can poison shape
Imposture with its long and demon train,—
The slaughtered Bedouin and the ravished virgin,—
A future pledged to sacrilege and fraud —
Insulted Heaven and deluded earth?—
Poison?—O God! 't were honey to remorse!—
Avenging Allah! double all my pains;
Heap pang on pang, 'till crushed affliction groans;
Make every nerve an adder—but shut out
The spectral, impious landscape of the past!

(*Enter Caled.*)

Caled. My king! my Prophet!

Moh. Caled, in that room
My sword hangs, by my pillow: bring it here.

(*Exit, and reënter Caled, with the sword, whilst Mohammed advances, in a reverie.*)

With this unblazoned sickle, (*taking the sword*)
I have turned
The tide of crushing persecution back,
And, like the lion, maddening in his lair,
Have laid the huntsmen at my feet. With this,
In spite of exile, fraud, and open war,

I 've founded a religion and an empire.
Farewell — farewell ! thou keen and faithful friend,
Blest instrument of Allah, in whose gleam
My foes expired, like dew-drops in the sun —
I ne'er shall wield thee more ! (*His arm falls.*)

Cal. O Heaven and earth !

Moh. For me, no more the battle-field will ring
With clashing scimitar and victory's laugh !
The houris and their groves will soon be mine !
Caled —— I leave the state in Omar's hands,
My Church, (*giving him the sword*) with thee ![5]
Preserve, extend the faith,
Till slave and freemen, serf and sceptred king,
Do homage at my tomb. Remember this —
No martyrdom but on the battle-field —
Islam or death !

Cal. (*shaking the sword.*) Islam or death !

Moh. Then swear that whilst an infidel survives
To taint the renovated earth, this sword
Shall ne'er be sheathed.

Cal. (*elevating the sword.*) I swear it !

Moh. Now, I die
Content. Damascus totters o'er my grave,
And half the East shall mutter, 'neath thy arm,
Mohammed is not dead. Go forth and conquer—
Though throned in Heaven, thy Prophet's with thee still.
But oh—I'm sick and weary!
(*He sits in the chair.*)
Where is Omar?

Cal. In search of a physician.

Moh. What!—for *me?*—
Ah, Caled! (*He shakes his head, with a bitter smile.*) I will take no drug but opium,
Unless your leech agree to lose his head,
Or cure me. But I've medicine for Omar:
Go, let him know it. (*Exit Caled.*)
Death! if, in thy cells,
We cease to think, to feel, and to remember,
Come, thou dear angel, make thy mansion here!
(*Striking his breast.*)
I look to Heaven—and lightning, leaping forth,
Writes blasphemy upon its frowning vault;
I turn to earth—and all is steeped in blood:

O'er every limb 't is creeping—creeping—creeping!
It trickles from my hands, imbrues my food,
Makes midnight scarlet: if I seek relief
Within myself, insatiate lust erects
Her speckled crest, and hisses—"I 'm thy God!"
(*He rises, and advances.*)
O for an eagle's wing to make the grave
To which I crawl, through poison or remorse!
Yet shall I weep and quiver like a child,
Because his bosom smarts?—there still remains
The pride to hide my torments from my friends,
The fearless forehead and unbroken soul!

(*Enter Omar.*)

Omar, rejoice!

Omar. Rejoice?

Moh. I 'm nearly dead!

Om. Thou canst not die, and leave us desolate?

Moh. Thy sexton wishes bury me alive.

Off with the hypocrite, or from thy face
I 'll pluck the mask! I know thee, through and through!

Om. No! or thou wouldst not call me hypocrite.

Moh. Yes! or thy sleek professions would deceive me.

Om. Thou hast forgotten that I pawned my life
To shield thee, in thy hour of doubt and sorrow,
When Islam was a passport to the grave.

Moh. I can remember, that when fools despaired,
The wily Omar, looking out of Mecca,
Foresaw my triumph, and resolved to share it.

Om. Thou hast forgotten, that o'er Beder's field
I poured my blood to save thee from defeat.

Moh. I can remember, that when others fought
For *me*, wise Omar battled for himself.

Om. Thy Moslems bled for Allah, not for thee.

Moh. For me and Allah—he includes me. Omar,
The thoughts that charmed my youth, amaze thy manhood;—
I shaped the future; thy astonished soul,
Beholding what it wished, effected, deemed

Mohammed but its tool. Through dim defiles,
I clear a way to everlasting truth,
Whilst Omar, tiptoe, o'er my shoulder, seeing
The incarnation of his dreams, exclaims—
"Well done, my pioneer!"

Om. (*aside.*) [He withers me!]

Moh. Yet I forgive thy vanity; it served
To lull thy jealousy. But I have borne
Thy sneering homage and insulting praise,
The self-complacency with which thy eye
Assumed acquaintance with my inmost thoughts,
Until repressed disgust has made thee odious.
Thy prayers, fasts, alms and scimitar, are worthless;
Thy heart is infidel!

Om. By Allah, no!

Moh. By Allah, yes! But Islam needs thy greatness;
And though, I own, I hate thee, she shall have it.
A man may be a pigmy to Mohammed,
And yet o'ertop his fellows.

Om. (*sincerely.*) I believe it.

Moh. I make thee my successor—thy domain

Arabia, from Euphrates to our sea;
From Arak's sands to Oman's pearls, from Sinai
To flowering Yemen.

Om. I am most unworthy
To wield thy sceptre.

Moh. Ay, indeed thou art!
But 't is a gift, whose precious influence
Ennobles the recipient. Allah's grace
Ere long will elevate thy soul: till then,
Practise austerity, and seem the saint
You hope to be. I give thee Syria too,
Now trembling in my grasp, and Caled's arm
To conquer it.

Om. He shall, at once, complete
Thy brilliant enterprise.

Moh. And Syria won, —
What then?

Om. (*thoughtfully.*) I shall be guided by events.

Moh. Ha! ha! Be guided by events! Ha! ha!
What! when the pliant future will assume
The form and the complexion of thy will, —
Be guided by events! No! though the tomb

Confine my ashes, yet, infused in thee,
Mohammed's deathless soul shall guide events,
And regulate the world!

Om. (*bowing deeply.*) Great master-spirit!

Moh. I'll add thy life to mine, and baffle death!
In thee, along the subject banks of Nile,
I'll nail the crescent to the pyramid;
In thee, I'll rob the Persian of his sun,
And gild him with the purer beams of Islam;
The Jew shall cast his musty forms away;
The Christian leave his cold, unnatural creed,
And, clinging to the Koran, spurn the cross.
My scimitar 's my sceptre! Be it thine,
And thy successors' — till the world — the world —
In love or terror, hail no God but Allah,
No prophet but Mohammed![6]

Om. May the God,
That fires thy lips, prolong thy life, to see
The change in Omar!

Moh. 'T were a blessed sight!
And hark — one word of counsel: thou canst vault
Nimbly into my seat, — but hold the reins
As I have taught thee. Leave me now! ere morn,

Medina's magnates shall confirm my choice.

(*Exit Omar.*)

(*Mohammed is seized with a paroxysm of pain.*)

Heaven! must I suffer thus, because too proud
To imitate the Nazarene? I sought
To be his rival—and I *am!* at least,
I shall be thought so — that 's my consolation!
Preserve me, God, a Prophet's name on earth,
And e'en when damned, I 'll celebrate thy justice!
And yet, I long — 't were some relief—to cry,
"Man—man! weak dupe of blind credulity,
Thy Prophet 's an impostor!" — But I 've gone
Too far, — 't is now too late: —confession 's worse
Than condemnation. With my dying breath,
I 'll fan the beacon of fanaticism,
And act the Prophet in the throat of death!

(*Exit Mohammed.*)

SCENE III *Vestibule in the palace at Medina. — Enter Omar.*

Omar. Felt lover ever such bewitching joy,
In presence of his mistress, as I feel
In prospect of a throne! Can he recover?—

'T is possible: — but no — there 's something here.
(*Touching his heart.*)
Yet he may linger long — a week is long
Between ambition and its aim.

(*Enter Abubeker.*)

Abubeker. The Prophet
Has just imprisoned Ali.

Om. Art thou mad?

Abub. The youth 's in prison.

Om. What!

Abub. I turned the key
Upon him.

Om. Do I dream? Imprisoned? — Why?

Abub. I asked no questions.

Om. Strange! Perchance, — excuse me, —
Thy daughter looked too tenderly upon
The stripling. Soft — she comes.

(*Enter Ayesha.*)

Abub. My child, explain
Why Ali suffers this indignity.

Ayesha. Because ———

(*Aside.*) [He loved his wife too much, and me too little.]

(*Enter Zeid, with Sophian, disguised as an aged Egyptian physician.*)

Sophian. I come to cure the Prophet.

Omar. Hast thou heard
The penalty?—failure is death.

Soph. I know it:
And the reward is *Heaven!*

Om. And, in addition,
A thousand purses.

Soph. 'T is not *gold* I want! (*Omar starts.*)

Om. Thou canst not cure him, without seeing him;
And, by his order, no physician dare
Approach him.

Soph. I am near enough.
(*He produces a small powder.*)
Behold
A talisman for every malady.
(*Omar starts again.*)

Ayes. (*snatching the powder.*) The hand of woman 's ever half the cure.
If it should fail, he will not love me less;
If it succeed —— (*aside*) —[he 's more my slave than ever.] (*Exit Ayesha.*)

Om. (*to Abubeker.*) Imprison this Egyptian,
and then fly
To glad the Prophet with a ray of hope.
(*Exeunt Abubeker and Zeid.*)
There 's something in that swart Egyptian's voice
I 've heard before —— By Heaven, it is—it is
Sophian! But his cheeks and wasted limbs
Are ravaged, as if centuries had fed there:
Such changes in an interval so brief?—
Impossible! But yes! despair and exile
Make minutes years. The talisman is poison!
Mohammed, blindly doting on Ayesha,
Will drink to please her. I can save him yet!
It may not be Sophian?— But it is!—
(*He goes—stops—returns.*)
O, with what dexterous and graceful ease
Ambition steps to crime! And here I stand—
A villain—but a villain for a throne![7]
(*Exit Omar.*)

SCENE IV. *Hall in the Palace — night. — Mohammed in a large chair, supported by cushions: seeing Caled and Amrou approaching, he counterfeits sleep. — Enter Caled, Amrou.*

Amrou (*in a whisper.*) An infant could not sleep more placidly.[8]

Caled. Hush!

(*He places his finger on his lips, and they retire on tip-toe.*)

Mohammed (*opening his eyes, and smiling terribly.*) Caled!

(*Reënter Caled, Amrou.*)

Caled. For the empire of the world,
I would not thus have shortened thy repose.

Moh. O, I have had a sweet, refreshing sleep!
On downy dreams, my youth came smiling back:
Methought a band of angels fluttered o'er me:
And some were like my boyhood's playmates, — some
Repeated songs unheard since infancy —
So soft, so sad; and, darting from their midst,
Cadijah, fairer e'en than they, approached,
In dazzling light and loveliness: she breathed
Upon my brow; and, with a glance of love

Immortal, pointed to the opening Heavens,
Then, dovelike, vanished in the golden air.

Amrou. Long may such charming visions gild thy slumbers!

Moh. In Heaven, Amrou, not here! Man 's near the sky,
When blessed with such a dream. And yet—I 'm better—
Far better—calmer—happier—free from pain.
What think you, Caled, if before a week
I head our troops again?

Cal. (*with a bright smile.*) Take back thy sword!

Moh. (*to Amrou, waving the sword away.*)
What—moping like a Bedouin!—where 's thy wit?

Am. I lost it when my Prophet lost his health.
But lead us 'gainst Damascus, and Amrou
Will sparkle so, that earth, alive with stars,
Shall charm the winking sky.

(*Enter Abubeker.*)

Abubeker. A sage from Egypt
Consents to cure thee, or to lose his head.

Moh. Egypt! there 's something in the name.

Abub. A land

Renowned for potent charms and magic lore.

Moh. I 'm sick of drugs and talismans and spells;

If Allah will not cure me, Egypt cannot.

I shall give audience: summon all our council.

(*Exit Abubeker.*)

(*Enter Fatima.*)

Fatima (*falling at Mohammed's feet.*) My royal sire!

Moh. My daughter!

Fat. Let me share

My husband's cell!

Moh. Forget thou hast a husband.

Fat. And die!

Moh. No tear should glisten for a traitor,

In eyes as pure as thine!

Fat. (*springing up.*) He 's innocent!

Traitor! — God send thee many such, my father!

Was he a traitor when his sword defied

These scoffers at the banquet, Islam's birth?

Was he a traitor when he saved thy life,

By risking his, — when, 'twixt thee and thy grave,
He reared thy mantle, and drove death away?
Was he a traitor on the field of Beder? —

Moh. In heart. I wondered why he fought so well.

Love blinds thee, Fatima.

Fat. I must be blind.

I see no pity in the father's heart, —
I see no reason in the monarch's rage, —
I see no justice in the Prophet's hand!
Canst thou ask mercy from thy God for man,
Yet spurn thy flesh and blood? Beware — beware!
The vine, whose treacherous tendrils shade thy heart,
Has poisoned it.

Moh. Too true!

Fat. Then fling it off.

Moh. I have.

Fat. Renounced Ayesha?

Moh. Ali.

Fat. God! (*She weeps.*)

Moh. Thy tears are worth a world of eloquence,
And all thy mother wounds me from thy face.

To prison, then, and bring thy lover here,
To justify his madness, if he can. (*Exit Fatima.*)
Be not amazed till ye have heard it all; —
Then gape, and weep, and madden, and revenge.

(*Enter Abubeker, Omar, Saad, Osaid, Ayesha, with a goblet, magnates of Medina.*)

What brings thee here, my young enchantress?

Ayesha (*kneeling.*) Love!

Drink health and vigor from this bowl, prepared
With icy cordials, to disguise and aid
The Egyptian's charm.

Moh. The withered atoms,
Preserved, for ages, in a beggar's pouch.

Ayes. No common charm could move a man to stake
His life upon its efficacy.

Moh. Ah! —
There 's many a man who stakes his life on less.

Cal. Dear Prophet, I have heard of wondrous cures
Achieved by these Egyptians: there are secrets,
Bequeathed from wiser ages, charactered
Mysteriously on their monuments.

Omar (*aside.*) [He hangs in doubt—a feather turns the scale.]

Ayes. Drink! Allah may have sent thee this.

Moh. No—no!

I recognize his messengers at once.

Ayes. Drink, for thy people.

Moh. Allah will protect them.

Ayes. Then, for thyself.

Moh. I need it not.

Ayes. Why, then—

For *me*,—whose anxious love will not resign
A chance, when in thy favor.

Moh. (*taking the goblet.*) As thou wilt:
A winning angel sits upon thy face.

Om. (*aside.*) [He pauses—I can still prevent it! But—
The throne?—Well—'t is his gift!—But then, he hates me.]

(*Mohammed drinks.—Enter Ali, followed by Fatima; he rushes quickly to Mohammed, and, snatching the goblet from his lips, throws it on the floor.*)

Moh. What! not content with poisoning, dost thou think
To rob me of the antidote?— Behold
(*To the assembly.*)
My wife's seducer, and my murderer!

(*Caled, Omar, and the rest, drawing their scimitars, spring towards Ali, when Fatima, flinging one arm round Ali's neck, shields him with the other.*)

Fatima. Strike! here 's the Prophet's blood, to sanctify
Your weapons!

(*They falter. Mohammed intervenes.*)

Moh. (*to the assailants.*) Patience!—
(*To Ali.*) Speak! thou shalt not die
Unheard. Hast thou not poisoned me?

Ali. Great God!
I 'd drink a sea of venom, ere a drop
Should touch Mohammed. There 's the poison— there! (*Pointing to the goblet.*)
And thou hast drained it to the very dregs.

Moh. The Egyptian ——

Ali. Is Sophian!

Moh. Sacred Heaven!
Where is he?

Ali. In *my* dungeon.

Moh. (*to Saad and Osaid, straining his hands convulsively.*) Let me see him!

(*Exeunt Saad, Osaid.*

Ali. The flaky darkness hid me from his view;
And hardly had he entered, than a yell
Of triumph, bursting from his lips, amazed
The vault, and frightful blasphemies
Revealed his name and his design. The walls
Were stone, or Ali had been here in time
To save thee.

(*Enter Saad, Osaid, Zeid and body-guard, with Sophian.*)

Moh. (*tearing open Sophian's vest.*) 'T is an Arab's breast!

Sophian (*raising a concealed dagger.*) And 't is An Arab's arm! —

(*Ali intercepts the blow, and wrests the dagger from him.*)

Moh. Sophian!

Soph. (*throwing off the disguise.*) Ay, Sophian!

Doubly prepared, by poison and by steel,
For vengeance!

(*Mohammed, forsaking his hold of Sophian, staggers back to the chair.*)

Ha! I 've had it. Die, thou monster!
Not all the antidotes in earth or Heaven
Can save thee now!

Amrou (*lifting his scimitar.*) Then, by thy kinsman's hand —

Moh. Hold! — 't were a death too easy.

Soph. Do thy worst!

When stripped of all I prized on earth, revenge
Was left, and made the sultry desert smile.
I saw thee writhing, as I see thee now, —
The Prophet and his glory at my feet, —
And then I laughed, and bade thee take revenge
Upon a ruined and a desperate man!

Moh. Poor fool! 't was Allah sent thee and thy venom,
To end a slow and withering decay.
Exult no more, for, on my death-bent head,
Thy vengeance falls like mercy, sweetest mercy!

Away with him! impale him in the desert,
And watch him till his dim, protruding eye
Beholds the vulture that shall pluck it out!

Soph. I care not, since I 've crushed thee on thy throne,
And changed the mocking drapery of success
Into a shroud! [10]

Moh. (*rising and folding his robe around him.*)
What nobler winding-sheet —
A Prophet's mantle, and a monarch's robe! [11]
Away with him!

(*Exeunt Zeid and body-guard, with Sophian.*)
Forgive me, Ali! (*He falls on Ali's neck.*)

Omar (*aside to Abubeker.*) [Dolt
And idiot — thou hast ruined all! To put
Sophian in the cell with Ali —]

Abubeker. Fiend!
I see thy meaning!

Om. — Might have cost the youth
His life.

Moh. Ayesha, here 's my guardian angel —
(*Pointing to Ali.*)
Say — did he tempt thee?

Ayes. I am dumb with shame.

Ali. And guilt!

(*She falls at Mohammed's feet.*)

Moh. Alas!—so young—so fair—so false!

(*He sinks in the chair.*)

The cup was drugged in hell! my heart 's on fire!
Here, Omar—Abubeker! ——

(*They kneel before him.*)

(*Looking at Abubeker.*) Innocent.

(*He looks at Omar, and shakes his head.*)

I doubt thee, Omar. Girl! (*Ayesha looks up.*) I doubt thee too.

(*To Omar and Ayesha.*) Did ye not recognize Sophian? (*Abubeker rises.*)

Om. I?—

O Prophet! (*He covers his face with his hands.*)

Moh. (*sneering.*) Ah! I wound thy tender heart.

Thou couldst not mean to poison me, Ayesha?

Ayes. By Allah, no!

Moh. (*to the assembly.*) Hark, Moslems! when a man
Has injured innocence, the best atonement

Is to forgive acknowledged guilt, and doubt
Suspicion's whisper.
(*To Omar and Ayesha.*) I forgive ye both.
(*Omar rises.*)
Ayes. I ask for death, not pardon.
Moh. (*his arm falling on her neck.*) Penitence
Removes the stain of deeper sins than thine.
Henceforth, my soul must be thy only love.[12]
(*She rises.*)
Ali, — I give the throne I promised Omar
To thee.
Ali. O Prophet! power is not, for me,
A thing to live for: be my legacy
Thy daughter and thy blessing.
(*Mohammed embraces Ali; then sinks back, in anguish.*)
Moh. Then elect a ruler — Allah will direct your choice.
Damascus — Death or Islam! Fatima —
Speak — in the dulcet music of thy voice,
Let me ascend to Eden.
Fat. (*falling on his neck.*) Father!
Moh. Daughter! (*He seems to die.*)

Om. (*aside.*) [He's gone! — Well — Omar has no master now.]

(*After an interval of silence, in which they are grouped over him, he starts up, and they fall back in terror, except Caled.*)

Fat. O God!

Cal. A miracle!

Moh. (*tottering forward.*) A pen and parchment!

I'll write a book as much above the Koran,
As Heaven above the sea that mirrors it!
Ah —— (*he is caught, in falling, by Ali and Fatima*) this *is* death! Now, angel, take my soul!

(*He extends both arms, fixes his eyes above, and leans forward.*)

Pardon my sins, O God! I come, I come —
Among my fellow-citizens on high![13] (*He dies.*)

Cal. (*falling on the corpse.*) Caled's a broken reed!

Ali. He 's dead!

Om. Thou liest!

Entranced like Moses, he will rise again

In youth and beauty. Infidel, my sword
Shall teach thee better!

(*They all start up, but Caled.*)

Ali (*grasping his scimitar.*) Silence, hypocrite!

(*Abubeker and Amrou interpose.*)

Abub. Peace! in his clay we have a heritage
Richer than empires;—let no brawl insult it.
Released from earth, his soul exults in Heaven;
And who would part the Prophet and his God?[14]

(*Omar sheathes his scimitar, and all bow down before the corpse.*)

(*Curtain falls.*)

NOTES.

ACT I.

(1.) The family of Hashem, to which the Prophet belonged, were all distinguished by a large vein in the forehead: not curving, like the Redgauntlet horse-shoe, but straight.

(2.) Musk is the principal perfume in a Moslem's paradise; and every houri's veil is fragrant with it. For the description of the angel, I am indebted more to the elegant poem of the disciple, than to the less refined rhapsody of the Prophet.

(3.) The mountain streams are swallowed up by the sands, soon after they reach the plain.

(4.) Amrou was a wit, a poet, and a soldier; yet there was a certain coarseness in him, inherited from his virago of a mother. The conqueror of Egypt, like Omar and Caled, would require a separate history to do him justice.

(5.) In this scene, I have endeavored to represent the state of things at Mecca. Mecca was an elective republic, in which two rival parties, the Hashemites, led by Abu Taleb, and the Ommeyites, led by Sophian, struggled for precedence. The Hashemites had long been in possession of the keys of the Caāba; but Sophian, profiting by his adversary's age and Mohammed's inactivity, was only waiting the old man's death, to leap into power.

I took the liberty of dropping the paternal *Abu* that precedes Sophian's name, having two of them already. And here I may

state why "*Mohammed*" is used in preference to "*Mahomet.*" Prideaux uses "*Mahomet*" under protest: so does Gibbon. Lane, who was six years in Cairo, says "*Mohammed:*" Burckhardt, coming from the fountain-head, Mecca itself, confirms him. This is, doubtless, the true pronunciation; but custom has half incorporated "*Mahomet*" with our language. "*Modus et conventio vincunt legem;*" and especially after Mr. Irving's authority appeared in the scale, was I unwilling to dispute the maxim. But the root of the word is *Ahmed*, illustrious, which gives significance to the name; and I cannot persuade myself to adopt any orthography which slurs over, and, in fact, omits, such an important element.

(6.) At first, our Saviour was Mohammed's model, and the fiery Arabian actually professed the sweet Christian submission, as appears in parts of the Koran. Islam, itself, means submission: the name was badly chosen.

(7.) Some say it was a sumptuous banquet; others admit but the lamb and milk. The latter being more poetical, and the weight of authority equal, I chose the Bedouin fare.

(8.) The horse of Nejed is the finest in the world, if Burckhardt's testimony outweigh Gibbon's.

(9.) "Is for the spirit, not *its clay companion.*" — This pretty circumlocution for body, is taken from a strange song, composed by one of the poor Sandwich Islanders, whose *clay companions* are vanishing fast enough.

(10.) Mohammed's vindication of himself is collected, almost literally, from the Koran, scattered here and there over many chapters. I admit copious plagiarism from the Koran, and shall not always embarrass the text by a note to point it out. I wish I had sinned oftener on this point: others may wish so too. Would it were the only sin!

In the first scene, Cadijah appears in the cave of Hara; though, according to a historian too apt to sacrifice literal truth to poetic pointedness, she was out of place. Gibbon describes it as a solitude to which Mohammed, during the month of Ramadan, withdrew "from the world and the arms of Cadijah." But Sale, a far better authority on this point, says, in his preliminary treatise — "That, having retired, with his wife and family, as he had done several times before, to the cave in Mount Hara, he there opened the secret of his mission to his wife, Khadijah."

ACT II.

(1.) The Black Stone, supposed to have fallen from Heaven.

(2.) The miraculous well of Zem-Zem, whose waters are still piously bottled by the pilgrim. The name imitates its bubbling.

(3.) "There were three hundred and sixty idols in the temple — men, eagles, lions and antelopes." — *Gibbon.*

(4.) Mohammed was often subjected to this reproach, and dreaded it. It was too true, not to be excessively annoying.

(5.) Abu Taleb is the most beautiful character in the history of Mecca. Under his firm, benignant guidance, the city enjoyed almost uninterrupted peace. His very infidelity has a noble constancy in it; and though his clear reason rejected his nephew's visions, his good heart did not permit him to forsake his fortunes. Even to this day, the mutilated tomb of the patriarch, at the termination of the Mala, shaded by date-trees, and cooled by a fountain, is pointed out with reverence; and an oath by Abu Taleb is more sacred than an oath by Allah.

(6.) "And if I bring
A nation to adore thee, shall I not
Deserve the splendid title I usurp,
And *be* the Prophet I pretend to *be*?"

This, I conceive to be Mohammed's delusion. Under any other view, this sincere impostor continues a mystery.

(7.) In the presence of *angelic* visitants, the Prophet could not always suppress a curse: he might possibly have been equally unguarded before his wife. Abubeker's residence was near the Prophet's, in the street now called Zobak el Merfek, "The Street of the Stone."

(8.) Unlike Lethe, this spring revived the past. Mohammed's surprising memory was ascribed to his diligent use of its waters.

(9.) "That make ambition virtue." — Another proof that rhythm often suggests a thought, as well as rhyme. Cadijah's fever is too perceptible in her jumbled metaphors.

(10.) The construction of this scene would have been different, had the play been designed for the closet.

(11.) Tayef is seventy miles from Mecca. In the sixth century, it was celebrated for its gardens and grapes; and, though sadly defaced by those Eastern Vandals, the Wahabees, its fruits and roses are still famous throughout Arabia.

The style of the Meccan is manly and frank; free from affectation, and the very opposite of the flowery language of Syrian and Persian. But Ali and Fatima are lovers; and love has a ridiculous style of its own, pretty much the same, all the world over.

(12.) The pictures of hell and paradise are collected from the Koran. Prideaux, I find, has done the same, but without

making a very important distinction, which throws light on the Prophet's character. Mohammed's Paradise was not a mere harem until long after Cadijah's death, until the cross of resignation was thrown aside for the scimitar. I reserved the sensual element for the fourth act.

(13.) "Should sottish Mecca wax too dangerous."

Mecca was called "The Illiterate," whilst Medina rejoiced in the name of "The City of the Book;" obtaining her superiority, perhaps, from the number of Jews and Christians mixed with her population. If, as Prideaux says, when Mohammed began to preach, only one man in Mecca could write, the poems of Ali and Amrou must have been oral.

(14.) "I *am* a Prophet now!
I hail, in this success, achieved by thee,
Thy recognition; and, once recognized,
Imposture ceases. Say, thou viewless King,
Does not the man, who, rising, self-impelled,
Plucks from thy throne the mantle he has earned,
Excel the infant Prophet who receives
The unmerited distinction in his cradle?"

This completes the view taken of Mohammed's original purpose. Our Saviour is still his model, but he hopes to surpass him. If he did not reason thus, I cannot sift his delusion, and give up the riddle in despair.

(15.) "She shall not die, by Heaven!"

"He shall not die, by God!" exclaimed my uncle Toby. The accusing spirit, &c.

ACT III.

(1.) The succession to the government of Mecca was not hereditary, but remained in the same tribe only as long as the power of that tribe preponderated. After the death of a sherif, whoever had the strongest party, or public voice, in his favor, became the successor. There were no ceremonies of installation, no oath of allegiance. — *Burckhardt.*

(2.) "A fly's pollution." — This strong expression is in the Koran.

(3.) Caled was the ablest soldier in Arabia, and the conqueror of Syria and Persia: fanaticism rendered him invincible. He is the highest type of those bold believers, who, leaving their native sands, carried the crescent over the fairest portions of Europe, Asia, and Africa. Men like him were ripe for Islam: Mohammed had but to say the word to the age — the word they were longing for, without being able to pronounce it.

(4.) It is commonly thought that the Arab resembles the Turk: but Mecca has none of the silent, grave automatons so common in the Levant. In the street, bazaar, house, or mosque itself, the Meccan laughs and jokes, and the gravest subject is spiced with a proverb or a pun. Amrou is not too merry for an Arab, though too insipid for himself.

(5.) "Strike, but hear!" — he *might* have heard of Themistocles.

(6.) "We'll meet them man to man, and horse to horse." — After writing this, I found it, word for word, in Massinger's Maid of Honor. How Homer sticks!

(7.) These miracles are gravely reported to have happened. It requires an Aurora Borealis, a cold night, and an earthquake, to explain them. The following one is not so easily got over.

(8.) The beauty of the Koran was the great argument for its inspiration: in the translation, it is surely not alluring enough for the devil.

(9.) Throughout this scene, Omar expresses the exact condition of Arabia more briefly and clearly than I can in prose. Abubeker was the richest man in Mecca.

(10.) The conviction of a strong mind is apt to carry faith to a weaker one.

(11.) It was only in success that Cromwell believed himself an instrument in the hand of God: fanaticism grows sceptical under defeat or disaster. Cadijah had scarcely reached the Tuba tree, before her Prophet consoled himself with Zeid's pretty wife, Zeinab. She is in his mind when he adds —

"Ah, woman's smile transmutes!"

More of this was originally written; but it is not very edifying to follow the Prophet too closely.

(12.) Whenever he desponded, as often happened, he sought comfort in the cleft of the Mountain of Light, where Gabriel once appeared, revealing the chapter of the Koran, beginning — "Have we not gladdened thy heart?"

(13.) This stratagem was, in fact, pursued, and might easily succeed, as the streets of Mecca are totally dark and unguarded.

(14.) The sherif, in the height of his power, resembled a great Bedouin chief, who submits to be boldly, and often harshly, addressed. — *Burckhardt.*

(15.) Eating camel's flesh is supposed to impart that animal's revengeful nature.

(16.) The Mohammedan doctors, with considerable subtlety, justify this revolution in their Prophet. They say, that "the

Prophets of God are of divers sorts, according to the divers attributes of his Divine nature which they are sent to show forth. That Jesus Christ manifested the Righteousness of God in being impeccable ; his Knowledge, in knowing the secrets of men's hearts, and foretelling things to come ; and his Power, in doing those miraculous truths, which none but God could do. That Solomon was sent to manifest the Wisdom, the Glory, and the Majesty of God ; Moses, his Providence and Clemency. None of which carrying with them a power to *force* men to believe, miracles were necessary, in their mission, to *induce* belief. But Mohammed was sent to manifest the *Fortitude* of God by the *Power of the Sword*, in itself sufficient to compel all men into the faith ; he wrought no miracles, because he needed none." (*Prid.* 34, 35.) By the same logic, the lion is a prophet of the power of God: Scipio and Cæsar certainly are.

A much more natural solution is, that this ambitious rival of our Saviour found himself unequal to persecution, and that, panting for revenge, he thus sought to justify it. As we have seen, he once insisted on submission and forgiveness, as willed by Heaven ; but the *repealing power* he claimed and exercised made the Koran fully as uncertain as our modern statutes.

ACT IV.

(1.) "La persecution fit toujours ma grandeur."

La Fanatisme.

(2.) "Who piously preserve each falling hair ;—
Ay, e'en my spittle."

Sale records these instances of devotion.

(3.) "Divisum imperium cum Jove Cæsar habet."

(4.) "—— the flowery roof
Showered roses which the morn repaired."
Paradise Lost, Book iv.

"*Repair*" is a favorite word of Milton's, and he always uses it exquisitely.

(5.) A torrent in the Hejaz is a liquid simoom, and comes with the swiftness of an avalanche. In 1626, the mosque filled so rapidly that five hundred persons perished in it.

(6.) This is a fair sample of what is "*ni vers, ni prose.*"

(7.) "And fear the Allah whom he will not love."
Voltaire may have had a hand in this line.

(8.) With this expression on his lips, a nephew of Caled's once rushed, singly, into an army of infidels; and, falling a victim to his rashness, had his wish gratified, *in part.*

(9.) "Bind their resplendent locks, inwreathed with beams."
Paradise Lost.

(10.) Ayesha, of course, was not in Mohammed's early battles; but we often find her on the field, in the wars that followed his death.

(11.) Ali was posted, with a reserve, on a hill, still pointed out to the pilgrim.

(12.) "God and Mohammed will support you now."
There is a resemblance between this and an answer which has recently become a part of American history.

(13.) "Some undone widow sits upon my arm,
And takes away the use of 't."
A New Way to Pay Old Debts.

The passage in which this occurs, is one of Massinger's happiest. *He* may have remembered the "Sit heavy on thy soul to-morrow!"

(14.) "*Vicisti Galilei!*"—"God," says Sharestari, "placed this prophetic light on Adam, to be a sign of the prophets that were to be born of him. It was subsequently divided into Isaac's light and Ismael's light: the former appearing in our Saviour; the latter in Mahommed."—*Prid.* 9.

(15.) Arabian lovers, like Aurelia, in Wilhelm Meister, thought it necessary to seal their vows by drawing a little blood.

(16.) "——— His steeds to water at the springs
In *chaliced* flowers that lies."

(17.) Mecca happens to be ten days' journey from Medina; but, viewed at this distance, they may approximate. Parallels meet in infinity.

(18.) "Adversity makes women of us all!"—*Conscience* makes *cowards* too.

(19.) The spot where Mohammed was born is now called "*Moled e' Nebby,*" in the street of "*Haret Souk el Leyl,*" in an extensive garden on the east of the city.—*Burckhardt.* Medina was always jealous of the Prophet's tenderness to his native city.

ACT V.

(1.) A Moslem, one day, feasting under a date-tree with his wife, chanced to see the Prophet going forth to battle on a camel. Animated by the sight, he armed himself, and instantly followed his self-denying master.

(2.) I have made remorse the main cause of Mohammed's mental agony; but I do not mean to exempt him from the physical prostration of epilepsy. It is most likely that he mistook "the falling sickness" for poison, which he imagined was administered to him by the Jewess of Chaibar.

(3.) Prideaux says, that Ayesha hated Ali, "because he acquainted Mohammed with her inconstancy:" it may have been her inconstancy in soliciting him. Ali was not the man to be hated by a young woman, unless she had first loved him. The history seems to wink that way.

(4.) Mohammed must have been easily blinded by Ayesha, since, with the fullest proof of her guilt, he makes Gabriel testify to her innocence, and died with his head on her bosom.

(5.) "My *Church* — with thee!" — Caled was a worthy priest, according to the order of the sword, and was baptized in blood,—"The sword of God,"— at Muta. In the first draught of the play, the battle was thus described, versified from Gibbon:

Saad. On Muta's heath the Christian dogs encamped: —
Victory or Paradise! we cried, and charged.
Our valor matched their numbers, till our bravest,
Weary with slaughter, sunk, and slept in Heaven.
Zeid, hacked to pieces — both arms gone — embraced
The standard with the bleeding stumps — then fell
A corpse.
Mohammed. Ay, liberty works miracles,
As well as sanctity. Proceed!
Saad. We stood
Aghast, and meditating flight, when Caled,
Striding his fallen friend, caught up the banner,
And hurled their legions back. His falchion flashed
Like an avenging angel, self-impelled.
Nine swords he shivered on the foe, — the tenth
Dispersed them!

(6.) In eighty years, Islam conquered more territory than Rome in five hundred. This passage may seem to be taken from "*La Fanatisme*," but it was written before I read Voltaire.

I abstained from reading him; not to be original, but that I might not force unnecessary differences. Though infinitely inferior to him, it is not as an imitator.

(7.) I cannot help thinking that Omar was a hypocrite, and good old Abubeker his innocent tool.

(8.) It will be observed, that the action throughout is chiefly at night. Little business, private or public, is transacted at Mecca or Medina, until after sunset.

(9.) The pious Hadjy, when saluting the Prophet's tomb, at Medina, never fails to address a prayer to *Fatme e' Zohera*, the bright, blooming Fatima.

(10.) Sophian's somewhat questionable courage has been fortified by despair.

(11.) "*Καλλιστον ενταφιον ἡ τυραννις*," was the advice of a high-minded courtier to the Sicilian tyrant, when asked which was preferable, death or flight.

(12.) "Henceforth my soul must be thy only love."—None of his wives were permitted to marry again. This punishment, so far as concerned Ayesha, was rather formal than real.

(13.) "Pardon my sins, O God,—I come—I come—
Among my fellow-citizens on high."

These are literally his dying words. The death-scene is accurately true to history.

(14.) There is no howling for the dead at Medina: it is considered disgraceful even to moan.

APPENDIX.

"The Life and Religion of Mohammed, as contained in the Sheeah Traditions, Translated from the Persian, by Rev. James L. Merrick, eleven years Missionary to the Persians, Member of the American Oriental Society," fully sustains the view I have taken of Omar, and of his influence over Abubeker. Before the publication of this valuable work, there was nothing in the language to warrant my interpretation of Omar's character, but his admitted jealousy of Caled and Amrou. As Omar was not meant for a fancy sketch, Mr. Merrick's recent testimony to the fidelity of the portrait is most welcome. But I shall ever regret that the rich fields of eastern imagery, presented by Mr. Merrick, in his elegant translation, were not sooner opened.

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